SIR FRANCIS DARRELL.

VOL. III.

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SIR FRANCIS DARRELL;

OR

THE VORTEX:

A Novel.

By R. C. DALLAS, Esq.

AUTHOR OF PERCIVAL, AUBREY, MORLAND,

&c. &c.

E i rimorsi, e il pentire, e il piangcr, nulla
Fia che mi vaglia? ALFIERI.

The gathering number, as it moves along,
Involves a vast involuntary throng;
Who, gently drawn, and struggling less and less,
Roll in her vortex, and her power confess.
POPE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

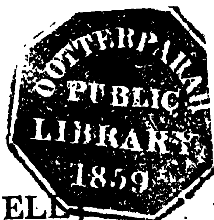
VOL. III.

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SIR FRANCIS DARRELL;

OR

THE VORTEX.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Mr. Vernon to Sir Francis Darrell.

Mount Vernon, Dec.

MY DEAR DARRELL,

You are ill, and you must be well. If I did not see the antidote as well as the bane, your letter would give me the most serious alarm. That conscious unworthiness, those choked avenues of love, that comparison of the damnable present indicative with the blessed præterpluperfect of the subjunctive, *am* with *might have been*, are all symptomatic of melan-

cholia, black bile, or, which is the same thing, blue devils. Why, one would suppose, that you had made it your sole employment to be constantly cracking all the commandments in regular succession one after the other, and that you knew so little of the nature of love as to suppose it essentially repellant, instead of attractive. Come, come, let me be your physician; — I know your case, and I engage for your cure. I will write my prescription, and, as a friend, I will attend to the making of it up, and assist in administering it myself. You will not have to make mouths at it: — you have no objection to syrup of squills; it is not a bit more nauseous:

Dulce ridentem Lalagen amato -	horæ xxiv.
Dulce loquentem - - -	quant. suf.
Adde	
Vocum et nervorum cantus -	pro re nata.

Sumenda extemplo, et per vitam adducta.

Sir Francis Darrell. L. V.

Nonsense, Darrell! Love not your disease! Well then, let it be your medicine. But as I am the M. D. called in,

I must claim my prerogative of complete confidence and implicit obedience. None of your raising the cup to your lip, and putting it away like a wayward child, or I must have you held, and the whole dose poured down your throat at once.

Before I resume *mon serieux*, in replying to yours from London, let me scribble a dozen French lines, which, I think, give a very fair, as well as pleasant account of love:

Il est aimable quand il pleure,
Il est aimable quand il rit;
On le rappelle quand il fuit,
On l'adore quand il demeure.
C'est le plus aimable boudeur
Qui soit de Londres à Cythère;
C'est le plus aimable imposteur
Qui soit né pour tromper la terre;
Il fait vingt sermens aujourd'hui,
Et demain il les désavoue:
On sait qu'il blesse quand il joue,
Et l'on veut jouer avec lui.

Now, my friend, try if you cannot trace him under one or all of these characteristics in that region of your frame which he is known to claim as his abode; and, unless you like him better weeping than laughing, make the place gay, and give

him a cheerful welcome. Stay he will, you may be assured, and I advise you not to put him out of sorts with glouting and blue devils for his companions in your heart.

Your letter, my dear Darrell, is the most serious one I ever received from you. I do not feel myself at all disposed to laugh at you, but I hope still to laugh with you, and often. I approve of your studies, and I heartily wish you success, but I fear your nerves and the *scrupulosity* of your imagination. You have not only to conquer *the serpent*, and the astronomy and chronology, the zodiac of Jacob's children, and the dishonourable practices of Moses himself by divine command; but when you have gained the victory, you will be for asking yourself whether it is your head or your heart that has gained it; and your doubt will turn the day against you — Now, with such a cynosure before me, methinks I should beat you all to nothing in sailing through the ocean I was so commanded to explore.

It is not my intention to preach

hypocrisy, my dear Darrell, but in the state of your heart, and let me add, in the state of HERS, you owe it to yourself, you owe it to her, not to be too nice in your revisions. I would convince myself as far as I could, and I would take the rest upon trust, and then you will be on a par, for that is exactly what she does. You see I obey you in believing that you love, but that I am not so obedient as to your swearing that you would not marry her:

> Il fait vingt sermens aujourd'hui,
> Et demain il les désavoue.

So far from running to your solicitor's with instructions for the settlements, I shall not even think of it on this side of Christmas, but I am not the less disposed to convince you of my friendship, by doing my best to turn your gloom to brightness, to make you a happy man. Whatever has soured your [illegible] been suffered to corrode too long — it consumes you daily — it is time to be wise.

Your opening your heart to me is the strongest incentive to mine to share your feelings and to relieve them; but I know your heart better than you do yourself, and upon my better knowledge will I proceed. It is diseased, and I am free to own, that I think it never could have been cured but for an interposition which I am half inclined to ascribe, in the language of the most exalted of her sex, to Heaven. Yes, the language is strong, but I will not recall it. My opinion of women, though not so derogatory to their dignity as you have at times expressed yours to be, has seldom raised them to that eminence of mind which, where found, justifies the sentiment you once quoted in ridicule from Milton — I almost daily see a "creature in whom excels

> Whatever can to sight or thought be form'd
> Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet."

And, if one, there may be more; but it has not been your lot or mine to find them in groups — perhaps it never will; but take my word for it, we have in

this instance, and let us not suffer it to pass without its due effect.

I was very sincere in my rapture, and how could I speak otherwise of a woman who, with endowments to command deference, and beauty that might almost warrant vanity, wins by unaffected condescension and humility? I am no flatterer, Darrell — I will not tell you I think that you deserve her; but, upon my honour, I do not think there is a man on earth who would so completely deserve her, if you were once fortunate enough to make her yours; and so far are your arguments against offering yourself to her sound ones, they are precisely such as I should use to incite you to it — an empty and a desolate heart she will fill, and she will renovate. You will be all that you ought to have been — such a woman is all you want — such a woman does not present herself every day. I conjure you by the friendship you profess for me, by the feelings of your heart in saving her, by her goodness and by her beauty, not to sacrifice happi-

ness to the indulgence of a morbid sensibility.

She has sensibility too, natural, healthful sensibility, and it will be your fault if, in respect to you, it continues confined to your soul. If it were not sacrilege in the present state of your mind to say it, I would say she loves you. Think I have said so, Darrell, — think I have some judgment, and that it is the fact. Do this, and you will experience that change of spirit, which I sincerely and ardently wish to take place in your feelings.

That *you* are in love every line of your letter testifies, and those most which contain the strongest denial. Your vestal fire, your contrast of the weak and the virtuous woman, your abstinence in shaking the hand you could have devoured with kisses, the " momentary something" that passed " uncomprehended and unexamined" at the Cecilian captivation of your ear, the October day, the visions of the night of the October day, the gazings of the twilight of the succeeding morning, the pressure in the

bower, et cetera — What is all this but — love? What would you say if I sent you indications as undeniable on her part? Nay, you don't wish it — and if I could I ought not. So for the present ponder my words, and persist not in the resolution of being your own enemy, and, what I shall forgive you for still less, the enemy of this noble-minded, beautiful woman.

"And why not young Dartford have her, &c."

How very sincerely, disinterestedly, and piously was that paragraph of your letter penned! It is an admirable piece of moral and religious reasoning. It is a regular argument — it has a beginning, a middle, and an end — the beginning sets forth a proposition for saving a young man by sacrificing a young woman; the middle proves the humanity of it, by showing how it will also save an affectionate mother; and the end infers that the young woman, this beauty of mine, should be left to her own choice, which she has too much good sense to make in a hurry. A Tully or a Demosthenes, an

Eldon or an Erskine, could not have laid the argument more scientifically, or brought it to a more accurate conclusion.

Now, what is to be done? In spite of your nice adherence to the rules of logic, facts are stubborn things, and set all the labours of Aristotle and Cicero at defiance — they leave the lady no alternative. What fact can possibly do that? say you, trembling for the intelligence of her having accepted young Dartford, or his mother. Shall I leave it by way of a Christmas riddle for you to solve? Christmas is at hand, and Christmas twelvemonth would leave you puzzling out a solution, which, when known, is as natural and clear as the sense of your aforesaid argument. I shall therefore tell it you at once — her Geneva lover has completely thrown her off, and will have nothing more to say to her. So you see that, between this volatile fellow and your conscious unworthiness, the poor girl is doomed to remain a vestal, or turn nun in her own defence, unless I take pity upon her; and really, if she goes on this way, daily winning more and more

admiration, there will be some risk of her supplanting La Belle; in which case I shall immediately set about supplanting you, soul and body, after having persuaded myself that there is more true happiness in a cottage than in a palace.

To be serious: that foolish lad Dartford is going to be married to an Italian girl at Rome of the name of Belvoce. Miss Saville knows her, and speaks well of her father, but, with a candour that does her honour, acknowledges that the lady is not such a daughter as might be wished for Mrs. Dartford.—Thus guarded by the invaluable interference of friendship, the mother, whose undue and injurious fondness of her son had incited her to a resolution of depending upon his not entering on so serious a contract without a certainty of those virtues and manners of which he well knew her estimation, and who was accordingly about to write in a style to please him, has written in the most firm yet affectionate manner to him; conjuring him, nay, commanding him to return to England on receiving her letter, and

not to think of forming any engagement till he sees her. I am angry, but what does it signify — there is fate in it as in all things else, and men and women are but its puppets differently dressed up to act differ t parts. Though perhaps fate is tottering on its throne with you — take care — it is a resolute despot, and marrying Dartford to a Belvoce may make a monk of you, as you are so determined not to marry.

The most absurd part of the history yet remains to be told. The same opportunity which brought his letter to his mother, brought one to Miss Saville, from her friend at Florence; who, when she wrote, had him enrolled on her list of suitors. Of this lady she talks as of a second self, and wishes he had been worthy of her. Her name is Pisani — perhaps you have heard of her before. They were brought up as sisters, and the affection of that tie exists between them in its dearest and purest state. It is delightful to hear the language of such friendship uttered by such beauty.

I heard of your *mauvaise aventure* on

the Malvern road, from Godfrey, when the party returned to Manor House, and I felt for you — it was devilish mal-à-propos. I don't exactly know what they think of it — After the first unavoidable notice of occurrences, the family ceased the mention of the Bramblebears. I once asked Miss Saville her opinion of Lady Betty : — the answer was short.

"I can only speak of her person," said she, "I think her handsome, and well-formed."

She immediately spoke of something else. Silence indicates thought; but, be that what it will, it is softened, if not altogether obliterated, by the impressions at Grove Park, by the happy 26th of October. You are no longer a dreaded character at Godfrey's; every individual extols you, loves you, prays for you — are you not mad in refusing the hearts of this group? Your account of the arrival at Grove Park made my heart beat quicker than usual — I thank you for the sensation — that your feelings were as you tell me is not to be doubted, but I almost doubt my senses, when I hear that you reject

all repetition of them — that you dash the bowl of bliss out of the hand that offers it to you.

In following you to your bower next morning, I have no wish to penetrate into the sanctuary, at the expence of a pang, such as I see it must cost you to open it. I can easily conceive, Darrell, what it all means, and how such an imagination as yours can work up a common incident, into all the refinements of a deep tragedy ; — but, my friend, a fine imagination is the worst gift of Nature, when employed upon the sinister events of life, and it behoves Reason to curb it. Without this check Nature is her own enemy, sacrificing all her joys to the indulgence of one gloomy fancy.

Poor Miss Saville must have been dreadfully shocked, when the idea of suicide presented itself to her, — what action of your's could have raised such an idea, so contrary to the resolutions I have heard you express on that subject? But be that what it may, every thing that passed in the bower, convinces me of the state of your heart, and I

really believe I may say of her's: and I sincerely hope that your studies will lead you to the worship of the God of Love, whether you find him in your Bible, or in the hearts of each other. Nothing will give me greater pleasure, than to be the medium of conveying to her sentiments that may promote the happiness I wish you both. I would repeat to you, that you have no time to be discussing delicate points of imagination, were I not of opinion that her heart is at anchor — yet trust not to this — If the ground be unsure and open to storms, the anchor may be weighed and cast in a safer harbour.

A few days ago, my sister gave an entertainment — it was a pleasant one, but I saw to what point admiration flowed, and in the midst of my gaiety, I thought of you, and wished my friend Lord Mariton at the devil. There are others touched, but he seems the most desperately wounded. The Godfreys give a ball on Christmas-eve. Will you not come down here before? You will find a friend in Lady Mount-Vernon; I won't swear

that the Godfreys and Savilles have not made her quite in love with you, but I suppose you will take no advantage of this intelligence, as you are sure that you are no gallant.—Pray put your books aside for the holidays, and come down, and if you like I will invite Rufus for *fun*.

Of La Belle I shall nothing at present—she and her dear Augusta, as she calls her, are so much together, that I cannot even breathe a sigh; but I fear I begin to be too seriously of your opinion that "she is beautiful."—I sometimes venture a look, as I accompany my guitar—She sings sweetly herself—but of voice none can be boasted near her Florence cousin. I do not wonder at the "momentary uncomprehended something," that hers in unison with the organ created. I have myself felt something like that something—only I comprehended it, and it was not momentary—when I have listened enchanted as she sung to the harmony of the piano. She plays and sings, however, but seldom, and seems to prefer painting. She makes

her cousin sing and play, and pretends to like to hear me make a noise with the guitar.

I conjure you, my dear Darrell, to come down next week, and stay till we go to town, which is to be about the end of January, before Parliament meets. — If you will not come, let me hear from you.

Ever yours,

L. Vernon.

LETTER XXXIX.

Sir Francis Darrell to Mr. Vernon.

May Fair, Dec.

No, my dear Vernon, no — I cannot present myself at balls and concerts — I thank you for your invitation, and Lady Mount-Vernon, and your other friends for their good will. I neither sing nor dance at present, but it is some happiness to know that you are all so happy, and that you are all enjoying life at this *exhilarating* season — Why should I disturb the fancy? If happiness can be fancied, fancy it by all means — but if you value the fancy, beware how you look skin-deep into one another's faces, lest you meet opinions to sweep away the smiles that compose the joys of the heterogeneous assemblage. How many in the hundreds that will be dancing about

the Savilles and Godfreys on Christmas-eve would shed a tear if they were to die to-morrow? Which would be the greater grief, the death or the disappointment? Is there a man or a woman among them, that could bear to lay open the thoughts of the heart to the fellow-being entitled bosom-friend? Will there be a spinster in the room, who will not dart the venom of envy on matchless beauty?—a he creature whose swimming eye will not tarnish it with the licentious effusions of his rank thoughts?—a Mariton who will not presume on his sweet person hung to the tinsel cords of a title? Oh Vernon, Vernon! Is this adulterated existence worth clinging to? No, "man's happiest lot is not to be." And shall this "beauty, too rich for use, for earth too dear," be exposed to the indelicate gaze of every lord and commoner of your brother's and of Mr. Godfrey's acquaintance? You will tell me *yes*; and you will turn some jest upon the love-feeling jealousy, and all that, which your letter has created in my stormy bo-

som — I know it — I give you leave — I will bear every thing from you, Vernon; for, in spite of your participation in the nature of this hodge-podge of fortuitous atoms, I have found in you, and in you only, a realizing of what my early reading taught me to picture as friendship. You bear with me, and I confess there is much to bear — and, if I wanted further conviction, it lies unfolded before me in the letter I have just received from you. I thank you for it — if it probes, it also cleanses and refreshes — I thank you for it — it has given me some pain; it has given me much pleasure.

I am not so wedded to my opinions, or so blinded by my peculiar feelings, as not to perceive that I have given you the usual grounds of judging the state of my heart towards Miss Saville to be what is denominated the passion of love, — nay, I've half persuaded myself that it is; but there is one undeniable proof to the contrary: I have never yet combined, nor ever can combine, her image in my mind with the idea of mar-

riage. I am sensible that she possesses the greatest interest in my heart — an interest, call it a love, that would impel me to devote my fortune to her, to lay down my life for her; but it raises not the hope or the wish of making her mine. On the other hand, I seem to detect something, — for you are not more clear-sighted than I am watchful on this point — in the repugnance I feel, and which I know I have already betrayed in this letter, to image her as another's; —but then, though this would be a symptom in ordinary cases, it is not so in mine; mine is not an ordinary case. — I think no man deserves her, and thence my repugnance: —she is divine, and corrupt mortals should not approach her, I least of all — I, who never would be accepted if known; and to be accepted, not known, would be to commit a murder worse than the first — that I mean which deserved the curse of Cain. — It is very clear, Vernon, very clear, that my heart, impressed as it is, does not lead me to think of Miss Saville, with the passion of a lover; and all that you have said, and

said so sweetly, but serves to animate my resolution of never carrying corruption and horror to her arms. — Oh! never.

You exclaim: "What neither think of her yourself, nor suffer another? Doom her to a life of celibacy! Send her back to Italy to be in time promoted to the government of a nunnery! — I do not say so — she ought to bless —— whom? Let your imagination create me a man worthy of her, give him a name, and tell it to me, that I may answer. But tell me not of fops, and loungers, and lords; and your friend Mariton is all three combined in one. Sweep him off, I beseech you, as you would a wasp from the finest ripening peach on your tree. If I talked of Dartford for a moment, it was that I looked on him as a being yet unformed, whom she might mould, and raise to some degree of worthiness — but among the beings already formed, let her not search — besides, he is abroad, and there was time to give judgment and circumstances their chance — but here are your beaux

regularly summoned to taste the nectar of her eye, and bid largely for the vintage. I beseech you, Vernon, by the friendship you profess for me, by the sanctity of yet unblemished beauty, by the enchantment of virgin-love, to protect the bloom of this incomparable girl. Do I not know men? Do I not know this Lord Mariton? Would I suffer him in my house? Your brother is very careless in these things, but Mr. Godfrey is not, and perhaps he is not invited to Manor House, on Christmas-eve. But he or any other contaminator of the source of love, wherever that source is found pure, should be rigidly fenced out — laugh, Vernon, laugh, if you please, but think not that I have forgotten myself — I say where that is found pure. — This is no preaching of a sinner against himself; — I have told you again and again, corrupting others was never my sin — yet sinner I am, and even she, my tasking angel, could not wish a sincerer penitent than I also am — This by the way ——

Your pleasant *prescription* would require no force if I were in a state to take it. — Mine is no childish shuddering — but an insurmountable impediment. My dear Vernon, your language is indeed very strong, but you are mistaken; I am sure you are mistaken, if not altogether in the state of my heart, completely in the state of HERS, which your emphatical dashes would try to persuade me beat but for me. It is not, it must not be so — wretched indeed would be her lot, and doubly wretched mine — we never can be united. Could I forget this, and you would prove that conception of yours true, I — but why do I yield me to this groundless suggestion of your buoyant spirits! — You were right before, when you said that the saving of my soul was the concern she had for me; — it was nothing else — it is nothing else. I do think your judgment good — good in general; but you see when you came to the indications on her part, you could not proceed, you could specify none. Ponder! I ponder to madness. — Her enemy! I should indeed be her enemy were I to

attempt to gain her affections. I believe I must beg you to desist writing on the subject. Take care, take care, do not persuade me to so damnable an act.—I have saved her from some savage villain, and shall I place a canker-worm in her breast?—You speak of her as she deserves:—"Such a woman does not present herself every day." It may be even true that "such a woman is all I want;"—but think not, my friend, that all that is wanted by her soul (for she has a soul) can be found in me.

I am "no longer the dreaded character at Godfrey's."—Why? They know me not; and they estimate me by a few late acts, which sparkle.—Vernon, I must open my heart to you, cost me what it will—but not now—not on paper—when we next meet it will be time enough. You shall judge whether it be madness in me, or virtue, to refuse "the hearts of this group." I merit not love, but I would not be hated—abhorrence from such beings would be the height of misery. Refuse their hearts! Why, man, I would give the world to possess them but

think you it is on me they would bestow them? No, it is on virtue: — what of that they have seen in me effaces even slander by its native brightness, which illumines every agent of it with its glory. They know no more, they seek no more; but the heart itself rejects that homage which it cannot claim. I know not whether hatred is not more tolerable than love, which a clear sight of its object would convert to abhorrence.

"An empty and a desolate heart she will fill, and she will renovate." What honied words are these! Where have you collected such sweet poison? It is

> the insane root
> That takes the reason prisoner. —

It binds the senses to imagination, and gives a seeming reality to the unsubstantial conceptions of the brain — the thought alone filled my heart, renovated my blood — for a moment — but for a moment — and the void and the desolation became more intolerable.

You see I answer your letter almost word by word. You are, in general, as

attentive to points as myself; in yours — but it is very excusable where you are — one or two things escaped you to which mine might have suggested a reply. I expressed an inclination to have the meeting with Lady Betty at Malvern cleared up, to have it satisfactorily proved that it was accidental. This is one thing you make no reply to. I requested, if you had an opportunity, that you would let Miss Saville know how I was occupied: — a second point unnoticed. I think I may mention, as a third, your not telling me whether you had had an opportunity of not saying that I was unhappy or gloomy, that is, of contradicting the idea, if it happened to be expressed. Pray laugh on; but after your laugh, be serious.

I will now tell you something of my studies, of which you may impart as much as your friendship appreciates. — I cannot boast of much progress in the religious history of the Jews. I meet stumbling-blocks at every step I take. The subsequent dispensation in favour of the rest of the world equally gravels

me. Vicarious compensation! and the victim a Deity! — One advance in favour of the Bible I have made — I do not open it to laugh. I do not, it is true, find conviction in it; but I have met with many sublime and exquisite passages. I have shut it up for a time, but intend to return to it; meanwhile I have been studying Plato, and with rather more success. If the Son of Joseph and Mary had had sufficient education, I should suspect he too had studied him. In the works of that divine philosopher we find the embryo of a Trinity, and the full birth of immortality. You must read these works, Vernon, with great attention; you must resume your Greek — that I know will cost you but little time; but if it took you ten years it would repay you. That great mind conceived Divine attributes; and the Being possessed of them must be a Deity. He conceived noble qualities flowing from a deity to a being created by him. Man must be this noble creature: — the existence of a good God and of a good man necessarily implies Omnipotence in the former and

immortality in the latter: if a good man dies eternally, what shall be said of the goodness, of the justice of the Deity? What is chance? Incongruity, or a solitary consonance amidst universal disorder. — What is order? Uniform direction. — Order is the proof of intention — intention proves mind — infinite intention an infinite mind — an infinite mind is God. So far these deductions are clear; but there is one attribute of a God wanting, or is not so clear, a prime attribute too in respect to mankind. I I told you I could not be a Manichean. What am I to do? I every where see signs of malignity. Here it is then that my faith is to have its first trial. — There is a God proved in every other respect to my understanding — it only remains for me not to believe either in my senses or in the reasoning faculty with which nature has endowed me. It is a hard morsel to digest — I must give it time. I do not hesitate, however, to say at once — that there *is* a GOD, and that there *ought to be* an immortality, but not an immortality of vipers. These

confessions, I fear, will appear to the *Tasking Angel* but a poor progress, but, such as it is, if it will give her pleasure, do not withhold it. Shall I write a scrap myself in the envelope of my letter for you to tear off and give her? Will it not be presuming on the interest I may have excited? Will it appear odd to her father or her cousins? It shall be but a few words, and I will leave it to your discretion.

In concluding, let me thank you for your pleasant airy French lines, and Mr. John Dartford's amorous versatility. If I had your *gaieté de cœur*, I would run this John and Rufus as a pair, and marry the one to Miss Kitty, the other to Martha. But I am in too serious a mood—so adieu. Write to me very soon, and let me know if Lord Mariton is invited.

Ever yours,

F. Darrell.

Written on the cover of the foregoing letter.

If the TASK has ever been thought of again by Miss Saville, it may not displease her to learn that her catechumen, if slow, is *serious*; that he has found A GOD, and thinks that there *ought to be* an immortality.

F. D.

LETTER XL.

Mr. Vernon to Sir Francis Darrell.

Mount-Vernon, Dec. 26th.

MY DEAR DARRELL,

You know me too well to suspect for a moment that I should be so brutal as to have delayed answering your letter till to-day, had I received it in time to comply with your desire of writing without delay, though, upon the whole, I am not sorry that the delay unavoidably occurred — why it did, you shall know presently: meanwhile be easy, perturbed spirit, and patiently await your fate. We have been to Bath. As soon as I tell you what produced the excursion, away flies the blood again up to your head, and the Lord have mercy upon you! You ought to be cautious, Darrell, for the flying of the blood to the head is the prevalent mode at the court of the scythe-sceptred Dry-

bones, and has been for some years — pray send for a surgeon, and be bled before you read any farther.

Well, taking for granted that a vein has been breathed, and ten or twelve ounces of blood subtracted, you may go on. A fixed head-ach for a day or two, attended with an unaccountable depression of spirits, had made a slight alteration on the countenance and whole appearance of La Belle's dear Augusta, Sir Francis Darrell's tasker, Mr. Vernon's beauty, Lord Mariton's — what shall I say? charmer, divinity, idol, whichever of these you please. It was first observed by Mr. Saville, next day by her cousins both. At dinner Godfrey proposed, as the best remedy, a change of place; and that, without more ado, we should set out the very next morning, and take a run to Bath: — it was immediately agreed upon and executed. It proved a very pleasant trip, and had the desired effect; for La Belle's dear Augusta — Homer and Virgil repeat whole passages, mayn't I? — Sir Francis Darrell's tasker, Mr. Vernon's beauty, Lord Mariton's — what shall I

say? is returned perfectly restored — with the exception of a slight degree of a symptomatic affection, called musing, observable by an experienced practitioner about the muscles of the lips, and by the narrowing of the space between the eyelids, while the eye itself seems occupied with no external object. This is observed by nobody but me, and it is by no means a dangerous affection, though it probably prevented her dancing so much the night before last, as she would otherwise have done. Be quiet — she did not once dance with Mariton. — Surely, there is anodyne enough in that to let me go on regularly, that is, in my own way, without reversing the order of things, to come to the ball at Manor House before we have been to the pump-room at Bath. I really feel for you, my dear Darrell, but I must not treat your disease too tenderly; I must not sigh and moan with you; I must rally, and laugh to rouse you, and roused you shall be to happiness, if ever happiness was known on earth, or your romantic caprice and wire-drawn refinements do not overset it all.

I have told you the immediate cause of our going to Bath, but the remote cause is to be traced some hundred and thirty or forty miles nearer to the celebrated region of fire-worship, in a certain spot called May Fair. Now listen: — you were more than half angry with me for not forcing a conversation with Miss Saville, on the subject of your gallop with Lady Betty. — All I could do at that time I did, and I told you how she cut the concern. — Her manner taught me that it was not to be repeated. — Circumstances remaining as they were, I should never have introduced it again; but it was your good or bad fate, that Lady Barbara liked the joke; and having heard Miss Saville mention you with some degree of enthusiasm —

" Ay, my dear," said she to her, before Lady Mount-Vernon and me, " I'd advise you to take care of him; — he is a very good creature in some things, and a confounded bad one in others. They say he is very bold, and makes love to every woman he meets."

" He appeared to me the reverse of

bold," said your beautiful champion, "and I hope that he is belied in other respects as well as in that."

"Law! my dear," replied Bab, "you know nothing at all about him; — he has behaved very well to you, to be sure, but there's no knowing where things will end with such a chap."

I watched Miss Saville's countenance: I saw her muster resolution not to let it vary.

"Don't be severe, Bab," said my sister, "you know nothing but by hearsay." —

"That's so like you," replied she; "I should be glad to know," continued she, laughing, "how I should know any thing but by hearsay? Dear me! I like the fellow — there's no fear of his doing me any harm. I don't wish to scandalize him, only I would not have this dear girl like him too well."

"My dear Lady Barbara," said she, "do not be afraid of that; — I wish him well, but I shall never like him *too* well."

A slight stress on the word *too* con-

veyed something of equivocation to my ear.

"The devil's in the man," resumed Lady Bab, laughing, "why does not he get married himself and leave other people's wives alone?"

Miss Saville said not a word, but kept her eyes on Lady Bab, as if afraid they should meet mine. I said —

"Darrell is slandered."

"Hah! Lewy!" cried she, "hold you your tongue, or — " here she stopped and laughed.

"I rather think with my brother," said Lady Mount-Vernon.

"Well," pursued Lady Bab, laughing, "if you won't believe your ears, believe this dear girl's eyes."

"Mine!" cried Miss Saville, slightly colouring.

"Law! my dear, to be sure, at Malvern: — I don't know the particulars, but Tim Dawson says he had his arms about Lady Bet, and that you saw it. — But I saw enough myself at Bramblebear Hall before ever you knew him. It's an old affair now."

Confounded, but not confused, the

lovely girl was at a loss how to attend to a conversation as new as improper for her ear: — but, invoked in testimony against you, she coloured deeper than before, and with a look in which there was dignity mingled with some anger and more sorrow, she said, she was not surprised that the man who could take such a liberty with her name, did not scruple to report a falsehood of Sir Francis Darrell.

" Law, my dear," cried Lady Barbara.

" And permit me to add," continued Miss Saville, without suffering the interruption, " we cannot have a stronger lesson of caution how we give ear to report."

" Why, my dear," roared Lady Bab. —

" And," said your persisting defender, " I must observe, that the detection of this falsehood affords me grounds to believe that all else reported against him may be false." —

Lady Barbara essayed another interruption, but in vain; truth and feeling were afloat, and the tide of sentiment

on which they rode was not to be stopped.

"Sir Francis Darrell's actions as far as I know them," continued she, "bespeak a very high character: his generosity is unbounded, and his attention to the rules of delicacy scrupulous in the extreme. I must repeat, Lady Barbara, that I am in no danger of liking him too well; but the gratitude I shall always feel towards him prompts me to wish that my esteem may not fall short of what is his due. It is a pity that the falsehoods of reports cannot be all as fully and as quickly detected as this; they might then redound to the credit of the slandered person, as this does."

Lady Barbara did not laugh as usual, but looked rather sorry.

"My dear," said she, "you take this thing too serious by half: — but Tim Dawson did not invent it — I'll be shot if he did; and it was natural enough for me to believe it, after what I saw with my own eyes at Bramblebear Hall in the summer."

"Bab," said my sister, "let us drop

the conversation, it cannot be agreeable to Miss Saville; — your eyes were perhaps deceived." —

"You mean they were perhaps too sharp," cried Bab, — "but, law! I would not hurt this dear girl for the world; and, as I told her, I myself think Darrell a very good creature; don't you be angry, my dear." —

"Indeed Lady Barbara," said she, "I am not angry; I have no cause to be angry with you; and, as far as concerns my opinion of Sir Francis Darrell, this foolish assertion of the gentleman, your friend" —

"No friend of mine, my dear," cried the rapid Barbara, "no friend of mine; — hunts with my cousin, takes a hunting dinner here now and then, rides well, but got the deuce of a somerset about this time twelvemonth, the 11th; I should not have pulled up to look after him if he had broke his neck, not I: — no particular friend of mine I assure you."

This eloquent rebutter of my cousin Bab's was in fact inspired by a consci-

ousness that Mr. Timothy Dawson, emboldened by the concern she had expressed at his fall, and certain consols to the amount of thirty thousand pounds, with a squint at a cousin's right of chase at Mount-Vernon, had shown symptoms of aspiring at her Ladyship's third finger of the left hand. Diana did not set the hounds upon him to worry him up; but then his case was distinguishable from Acteon's; it was all fair and above board, and though his goddess laughed him into a mute centaur, she continued, and continues, to hunt with him whenever he pleases to join the hounds. Lady Mount-Vernon smiled.

"Barbara," said I —

"None of your jokes, Mr. Vernon," cried she, with her pleasant soft laugh. "I'll have none of your jokes; come, my dear," putting out her hand as she went across the room to Miss Saville — "kiss and be friends."

And down she popped her head and ravished a kiss. You would have been as jealous as Kitely, had you been there and in my position. She had on her

riding-habit and a round black hat; and as she bent I saw only her bust, with her florid cheeks and round face: if you had not taken her for a Bacchus embracing Ariadne, you would have sworn it was an impudent fellow kissing your *Tasker*, — only there was no resistance on her part, and on Bab's part she gave a smack as if she liked it; — but remember Bab's a woman. I longed to trim her, both for the scandal and the kiss, but I thought it better not to bandy jests with her; and therefore I only took the opportunity of assuring the party with a serious face, that I knew for a certainty, to which I pledged my honour, that the meeting at Malvern was unexpected by you. In spite of Bab's beginning a laugh, which she curtailed of more than three parts of her usual ha ha's, your champion was pleased even in a higher degree than was perceived by her two friends. I thought she thanked me by her look; and the more that she deemed it proper to restrain her own instrument of words.

Now comes a blast, in the shape of

Mariton: bear it well, it will soon be over. But in he came, just at the conclusion of this smacking pacification of the Belligerent Powers, a newspaper in his hand. His devoirs were no sooner paid than he exclaimed, —

"Well! who can *this* couple be?"

"A couple of hounds?" asked Lady Bab.

"A couple of distinction," replied he.

"Another elopement?" quoth Bab.

"Even so," responded my Lord, "another and another."

Some of our Vortex, thought I.

"Let me see," said I, taking the paper out of his hand.

I easily found the paragraph, as a cross in ink was put to it by way of reference.

"I wonder Caroline is so long," said Miss Saville, not liking the topic, or dreading the perusal of the paragraph, "she was to have taken me up at two, and it is ten minutes past."

"Dear! my dear," said Lady Barbara, "you always give half an hour's law: — come Lewy, an't you going to read?"

I handed the paper back to Lord Mariton, who read as follows: —

"Report talks of the elopement of a lady in her way from Cheltenham to Bath with a gentleman, the intimate friend of her husband: — they are whispered to be a couple of distinction, Sir * * * * and Lady * * * * * who are off for the continent." —

— "I think I hear the carriage," said Miss Saville, rising and going to the window.

"So it is," added Lady Bab, following her, "there it is yonder, turning round the fir plantation: but law! my dear, what good ears you must have to hear it a mile off!"

"These reports, my Lord," said my sister, "deserve nothing but contempt: this will be contradicted to-morrow."

"If it is not true," replied Mariton, "and I were Sir Francis Darrell — "

— "Sir Francis Darrell!" said I, "you know that he is my friend?" —

"I do, and I therefore give you my authority: it is the talk at Acheson's House in Hereford."

"I take upon me" said I, "to pledge myself to you that it is false; may I then beg of you to contradict it?"

He assured me he would:—I then declared loud enough to be heard in every part of the room, that I had lately received a letter from you, and knew that you were much engaged at your house in town. You see what it is, Darrell, to have a character.—There was to me, who was watching every muscle of indication, an evident agitation in the bosom of your lovely friend: I fear it was not unobserved by Lady Barbara and my sister. She made several blunders in her replies to Lord Mariton, and was all but rude to him. The Godfreys soon took her away. They had left her, at her own desire, to pass an hour with Lady Mount-Vernon; and, after visiting the Thomsons and the Westerns, whose places in this neighbourhood you know, they returned to take her up. Whatever my sister, or Lady Barbara thought, they disclosed no suspicion respecting the state of her heart, but in perfect unison resounded

her praise, which Mariton echoed with idolatrous grimaces and contortions. You may depend upon it, he is desperately in love; and you have no right to be angry with him for having eyes as well as you: the truth is, that he is not above the level of the herd, and that instead of being an ornament to his title, his title is his chief ornament. Miss Saville's discernment should have been enough to set you at your ease with respect to him; but since that is not sufficient, have patience to go through what I have to write, and you shall have more vulgar inducements.

A day or too after this, I rode over to Manor House, and observed the change in Miss Saville which I have mentioned, and which I could not but attribute then, and still do, to the effects produced on her feelings that day at Mount-Vernon. I naturally made the observation of a change to Godfrey, and found it had struck them all, but very free from my attributions. Considerable uneasiness was the consequence, and Godfrey, as I told you, proposed at dinner

the excursion to Bath; Mr. Saville, as he seconded the motion, saying, "Vernon, you must go with us." — *Vous concevez bien*, that I did not want much pressing on the occasion. The only question was, what was to be done with the ball for Christmas eve? It did not require a debate; after a short conversation across the table, it was agreed, that the whole affair, decorations, taste and all, should be left to the experience of the housekeeper and butler, who were to receive such friends as had been invited to come a day or two before and take their beds in the house, if the master and mistress were not at home in time to do the honours of hospitality themselves; and that, if Miss Saville was not better in the course of a week, the ball should be put off altogether, and apologies written to the company invited. Thank Heaven! Miss Saville was better in the course of the very first day, and, before the end of the probationary week, was as well as ever she was in her life, and more beautiful than ever,

Something of our story at Bath you will naturally expect of me. Miss Saville was the only one of the party to whom that city was new, and she admired it much. She observed that the Italians, as far as she had yet been able to judge, surpassed us in the magnificence of their edifices, their churches, and their palaces, but that for moderate domestic habitations, cleanliness, and comfort, she had seen no town in any part of the world which could at all compare with Bath. The baths, the public rooms, the assemblage of company from every part of the kingdom, excited her admiration. Having cordially expressed all she felt in approbation of the town, she with equal candour owned that she was struck with one effect of its being a popular rendezvous, which she could not but think was to be lamented, that was, it was a centre of attraction for all the loungers of the kingdom, a character painful to contemplate, as well as dangerous to virtue; not that this was more the character of Bath than that of every other such rendezvous. And the fact, Darrell, is, that the Vortex

is generally peopled with loungers, and beings that have nothing to do but amuse themselves. I think she was rather fastidious on the subject; however, it is certain that she unconsciously marked to her cousin with displeasure some persons, who, I knew, only preserved their places in company by means of the *Spartan virtue*. Above all, she could not bear the personal exposure of our Vortical ladies. I have seen her look at her cousin with a kind of reflected shame, when she has found herself near any of those *Nudes* of the Vortex; — and to the Vortex, I believe, they peculiarly belong: indeed I must own this Vortical exposure, which classes women in their taste and appearance with the abandoned, is always considered among us as the signal of unprotected virtue. On the whole, she admired Bath.

But I must not confine myself to telling you how she admired; — I must change to the passive voice, and tell you how she was admired: though you will imagine this better than I should paint

it, yet even your imagination must be allowed its full scope to come near the fact. Were I to dwell upon all that happened, and all that was asked and said, my letter, already long, would not come to an end this week, and I have yet much to add. Vortical subjects in mass. I must leave behind at Bath, where our whirling friends generally *conglomerate* about Christmas. You would be astonished at the variety of personages constitutional and professional that enter the system. We have not only Vortical loungers, like myself, but Vortical statesmen, Vortical legislators, Vortical lawyers, Vortical physicians, Vortical surgeons, Vortical divines, — these are in general, the evangelical Rufus's friends — Vortical hunters, Vortical farmers, Vortical brewers, Vortical actors, Vortical musicians, authors, philosophers, soldiers, sailors, lords and ladies of all ranks, matrons and spinsters of all ages, twirling away; and, as the crowd moves round, it is perpetually attracting new, thoughtless subjects:

"The gathering number as it moves along,
Involves a vast involuntary throng,"

all in pursuit of the fascinating IDOL, whose *bells* mark her circle, and lead them on to

"Roll in her vortex, and her power confess."

Among those whom we left at Bath, you may be sure I was not a little pleased to include the Bramblebears; — they arrrived the day before we set out on our return to Herefordshire. It had a better effect than all the mineral waters in the world could have had, and if any thing was wanting to the complete restoration of our patient's spirits, as well as her general health, here we had it.

One of the Vortex we brought away, — for one, notwithstanding your exclusion of him, my friend Rufus undoubtedly is, evangelically, though no divine. I found him in the pump-room, discoursing to a group of Vortical females in scriptural phraseology, than which nothing can be more injurious to the Scriptures. I believe he left them in the middle of a sentence to fly to us, and such transfu-

sions! He hinted so plainly, then begged so hard to spend a few of the holidays with us, that not to indulge him was impossible, though I fear the poor devil will long repent the freak; but more of this anon.

Before I proceed, my dear Darrell, I will attend as seriously as I can, or rather as I ought, to the state of your disease, for by my skill in *nosology*, after some doubt whether it was *syncope* or *palpitatio*, I am clearly of opinion it is a compound genus, belonging to different orders, but of the same class, to wit, *neuroses*, and that it requires a light treatment; we must, therefore, fall upon some means of removing the impediment you are sensible of, to your taking the pleasant dose I prescribed for you, and a better cannot be. I have again been studying your case in your last letter, and my opinion of the nature of it is completely confirmed. It is unnecessary to enumerate all the new confirming symptoms; the grand obstruction in the œsophagus, in plain English, is nothing more than a lump in the throat, an hys-

terical ball, more common to be sure in female subjects. *They* take drops of ether; *you* shall have ethereal draughts: this is a medicine that will make its way in spite of all lumps. Dear Darrell, if I leave this strain for another, it must be to vent rage. Here is bliss, bliss unparalleled, meeting you, and there are you curvetting and skipping from one side of the road to the other to let it go by. I do think you are mad. Corruption and horror! Zounds! — I can't help swearing. And what is this corruption and this horror? I don't want you to tell me *particulars*; — I can tell you *generals*, which you know contain particulars. — A girl breaks her heart for a boy: — to dissipate chagrin, he plunges into follies, called by the grave ones vices: — hence a tremendous character. This is your *corruption* and *horror*, I have no doubt. Well now; allowing it, have not you suffered enough to wash it away? Don't you declare yourself a sincere penitent? — you are half a Christian already. Talk as you will, you never were in love before. Love is the passion

of a man; in a child it is an affection without judgment; it is too mighty for a half-grown heart. It may be sweet and something like it, but it is not LOVE; — not such a passion as at this moment fills and expands your heart for *your* AUGUSTA. What words! How unexpectedly did they flash upon your eye! Yes, *your* Augusta. — Yours — that is, if you please, Sir Francis, no compulsion being intended. Darrell, you say, you will never marry her; — she says the same of you; the meaning of which, in our mother-tongue, is, that you are both determined to go a great way round to come at last to your destination, all to avoid a style or two in the short cut, which I am ready to help you over. The truth is you are a couple of congeeing folks, perpetually *how-d'ye-do-ing* and *good-bye-ing*

> " And now you salute her with congee profound,
> Then her ladyship curtsies half way to the ground."

Now this is all very fine, but to my mind it is neither so natural, nor so pleasant as Lady Bab's plump, " Come, my dear, let's kiss and be friends."

In giving me credit for my *gaieté du cœur*, my dear Darrell, I know you think me incapable of indulging it wantonly, while you are suffering seriously. I received your letter only on the evening previous to the ball at Manor-House. I believe I read it with an emotion almost, if not altogether, equal to yours when you wrote it. I read it again the next morning, and it left a very serious impression upon my mind, one that would be the most painful I ever received in my life, if it were not accompanied with a hope that your good sense will interpose, and assist me in determining you to combat and to conquer the monsters of your imagination, monsters more dangerous than the paw of the lion or of the bear. Real evils may be overcome, but the shadowy evils of the brain defy the utmost skill of man. If I jest upon your feelings, my friend, it is with the view of reducing them to the proper standard of human nature, and to prevent that elevation of mind, which tends to exalt you beyond it, from rising to an exaltation of the brain. I entreat you to

listen to me with patience, both when I am serious and when I jest. I am most serious now in telling you that you are in danger of the most dreadful horrors, if you do not get rid of those imaginary ones with which you clothe some boyish acts, and from which it is incumbent upon you to deliver your mind. You say, you " would never be accepted *if known*," and that you " cannot bear the thought of being accepted *not known*." I agree with you in the latter part of this sentence, but not in the former. I am sure that nothing which you can possibly have to disclose would sway the sentiment of such a woman as Miss Saville: but put it out of doubt. You will remind me that you would once have done this, and that she rejected the confidence. That is no good argument. She could not, with delicacy, have done otherwise at the time, or even now, as circumstances stand: but there is an obvious way of obtaining her ear to all that you would impart. Solicit her hand. You must do this, and soon, or you ought, in honour, to think of her no more.

I know that the place you occupy in her mind excludes at present every other man; you are, therefore, bound, my friend, to take a decisive part, either to lock the chain upon her heart, or let her be convinced that it ought to be thrown off.

You desire of my imagination to create you a man worthy of her, and to baptize him, that you may consent to her blessing him. Now, though such a creation as you ask for requires only something of a poetical fancy, neither the creation nor the christening is necessary: a little moulding is all that is wanted, and his name is Francis. The moulding work, I own, I find rather difficult; but if you will give me a hand heartily, we shall soon complete the figure most worthily, and then we will have his *Worthiness* blessed with all possible dispatch. I see that I am running into levity too soon again. Then, all trifling apart, I will now, before I attempt to amuse you, seriously consider your letter, and seriously perform the office of friendship. I will not lose time in convincing you, that

you are in love. You already own it yourself in spite of your unintelligible distinction of never combining the image of your mistress with the idea of marriage. Another acknowledged fact is, that you would give the world to possess the esteem and affection of her friends. The possession of such love as hers, and of such friendship as theirs, would be, beyond doubt, the summit of human felicity. I take upon me to say, that it is in your reach. You do not expect to hear that Miss Saville has been so weak as to declare such an attachment, nor would I have her suppose that I know her heart so well as I do. Darrell, she loves you: but she is not one of those damsels that lose their hearts. She has not lost her heart; she never will lose it. I am convinced she will *give* it to you, if you will but choose to beg it. She is one of those who can love what appears lovely, but who can, uninjured, withdraw affection on being undeceived. She speaks of you with a zeal, which, I well see, covers love, but also with a prudence which satisfies herself

that she may bestow her heart upon another man, if she finds that you are not the person to whom she *ought* to give it. I have the pleasure of conversing with her frequently, and sometimes, though rarely, alone. I have never lost an opportunity of speaking of you to her when I could do it without a risk of betraying my drift. I am a little selfish in doing this: it confirms my place in her good graces, for I won't give you *all* the merit of her favour, and makes me *doubly* agreeable, for there is no topic so agreeable to her. Now, my life on't, you will upbraid me with unkindness, or indolence, or I know not what, for not writing out all our conversations in regular dialogues; Vernon, Augusta, Vernon, Augusta, through a whole quire of large post:

VERNON. A cold morning, Miss Saville.

AUGUSTA. Very, indeed.

VERNON. Where's Mrs. Godfrey.

AUGUSTA. She has a head-ach this morning.

VERNON. I am sorry for it — I will send her some *eau de Cologne* — some that Darrell brought from Paris.

AUGUSTA. Does Sir Francis recommend it?

VERNON. To rub the temples when the head aches.

AUGUSTA. Will you fill my bottle also?

Finis dialogi.

Godfrey came in, and thus ended a dialogue, which contains more solid argument in proof of a soul than you have found in the Phædon you have been studying. — But again to be serious: I cannot give you all the little symptomatic traits that daily occur; but, though out of its order, you shall here have one which to me is decisive. I was puzzled how to deliver your note to her. I wished to see the effect, but I did not wish others to observe it. I knew she would read it to her cousin, but, had I given it before her, it would have been in such a manner as not to produce any visible effect — if done alone, I could indulge my

design suddenly. I had an opportunity of the latter. — Leaving Rufus to Lady Bab, if he should appear before I returned, which I had some reason to doubt, I rode over on the morning of the ball to Manor-house — I found her in her cousin's little book-room playing on the sofa with Caroline. I put a good deal of eagerness in my manner.

"Miss Saville," said I, "I have rode over myself from Mount-Vernon, with a letter for you."

"From Lady Mount-Vernon?"

"Oh no, from Darrell."

I could at that moment have knocked my head against the wall, for daring to witness so tell-tale a sensation. She would have hidden it. I hope she thinks that she did. If she had not been sitting, I think she would have fallen as if shot, by the suddenness of my manner. As it was, she threw her face upon Caroline, and rubbed it on her little neck, as if in continuation of their play, which to be sure the child was courting; but I caught a sight of the blood rushing to her face before she could bury it between the

neck and the shoulder of the sweet laughing little girl, who looked like a Love fondled by one of the Graces. — But, though she could thus avert her features, she could not conceal the colour on her neck, so deep was the tinge produced by the name I had pronounced.

" I beg your pardon, Mr. Vernon, this little rogue —"

She went on, Caroline laughing the while, till she thought she was sufficiently relieved of her rosy hue, to show me her face, when she again begged pardon, and made the best of it, which I helped her to do, being as unconcerned and unobservant as she could wish. I suffered the delay of her reply to rest with the little girl, and presented the cover of your letter.

" It is directed to you," said she, " and open."

" It is a short note," replied I, " written on the envelope of a letter to me. He says it is for you."

On reading it, not the slightest confusion remaining on her countenance, she smiled, and said : —

"This is very delightful, Mr. Vernon; if Sir Francis could know what real pleasure it has given me, it would perhaps be some gratification to him, for I believe he honours me with his esteem. Will you have the goodness to assure him that I am truly happy to hear of his progress, and that I feel much obliged and flattered?"

"I certainly will, if you please," said I, "but his gratification would be heightened, if your pleasure were expressed in an answer to the note, under your own hand."

"I believe," replied she, "that I must consider the note, though directed to you, addressed to me."

"Clearly," said I.

I firmly believe she danced less at night, by two dances at least, in consequence of receiving this note in the morning. Yesterday she gave me her answer, which you *will find* enclosed — *will* find! as if it was not read the first thing and kissed a dozen times, before you began with my letter!

But to be serious again, for I do somehow naturally slide out of the serious, which proves I was born for the Vortex, unless by a dilemma it may be proved that the Vortex has generated my levity — But to be serious, my dear Darrell. — In the face of demonstration you are doubting, and frittering away happiness. — *Your* impediment you can, and must get rid of; you *must* be worthy of her. — You *are* worthy of her; your feelings prove it. You must confess yourself to her, and my life on't she will absolve you. — *Her* impediment must also be got rid of: but I fear it is of a more insurmountable nature, and I find it less easy to advise you. It is her declared determination not to marry a man who is not a Christian, of course she cannot connect you with the idea of marriage. I can only repeat seriously what I said jestingly in a former letter, I would have you do as all men of all religions do, and nothing more I believe is required — convince yourself, as far as you can, and take the rest upon trust. I have banished those subjects from my thoughts

long, but that is what I would do, if I were to take them up again; and I certainly would take them up again, if I had such incitement to the study. You have already made an extraordinary progress, such a one as has awakened some desire in me to see how you have brought it about — but zooks! it is not time for me to think yet — the lively Vortex does not lose its charm at four-and-twenty: let those think who cannot dance; let those reason who cannot laugh. There are two epochas in a man's life, when he ought to begin to think: the one is when he is going to be married; and the other, when he is going to die. What use is there in thinking till one or other of these epochas? Now one of your epochas is at hand, and you are properly occupied. I can't direct you in mysterious matters, or I would most willingly; but I think your mistress could give you some hints that you might improve, and I shall wind up this serious part of my letter by advising you, by conjuring you, to declare your feelings to her, and let her reply be your guide how

to act. You will have no peace till you do this.

And now I think I may go back to my friend Rufus, whom I left under Lady Bab's protection, when I rode over with your note to Manor-House in the morning of the day of the ball. He is a sinner, every inch, soul and body. — He is rapidly quitting all reserve with me — I once said to you that I thought of making a sinner of him; he was ready made to my hand; he only wanted a little drilling to make him sin like a gentleman. His leer is abominably *parlante*. I absolutely blush at times when I observe it, but it is all ascribed by the ladies to his evangelical transfusing: I think he is making love to three at once, Lady Mount-Vernon, La Belle, and her cousin. He has been trying to convert the last, and has actually consulted me upon the possibility of a Christian marrying a Papist, assuring me that it is his only objection to offering himself to the young lady, and hoping that the light of reason might remove it. They seem to have forgotten or forgiven his taste for statues, after a successful

essay he made in the pump-room at Bath to recover himself; for when he eyed us, I clearly saw that the *silk-stocking day* was on his mind, and that he doubted his reception by the ladies. Their "how-do-you-do Mr. Palmer," revived him, and he patted me on the shoulder, saying, as he pointed to the figure of Beau Nash:

"That was the patron of the place and a man of true taste, and you see he has his clothes on. This is the resort of people of the finest taste, and yet you see they don't take his clothes off; tell me no more, my friend Mr. Vernon, of Praxitiles and Canova; their beautiful, vile works ought to be kept in their proper places, in long galleries and dark museums, and not erected along public roads to annoy modest passengers, and scandalize our *pure religion.*

Here he squinted or leered at Miss Saville.

"Yes, I say our pure religion, which admits of no statues or images, clothed or not clothed.—I understand you," said

he, seeing me bend my brows, "I am talking of Beau Nash."

Conceiving from my look that he was on forbidden ground, he lost his train of thought, and brought himself up with putting us in mind that he was talking of the figure before us, and he came to a dead halt. There was a smile round our party, but it was one of kindness and pity, not of contempt — the very show of religion and virtue was enough with these kind hearts to ward off the last; and they thought, what was the fact, that his object was to atone for his error, and remove any unfavourable impression his simplicity might have made — this was enough for them. But the rogue did not deserve their lenity. It was an outward and interested act. As they walked on I kept him back by the arm, and said;

"Don't you see, why the statuary did not undress Beau Nash?"

"I protest, I don't," replied he, looking up at the Beau.

"Look again."

He looked.

"I did not think you so dull, Rufus," said I; "can you tell why the ancient Greek and modern Italian sculptors gave their gods and goddesses slight or no drapery?"

"No doubt," replied he leering, "to show the beauty of the figure."

"Now," said I, "look at Beau Nash — don't you think they did right to clothe him?"

"Yes, yes," said he, laughing out, and sporting wit, "I see clearly that the beauty of a beau is in his clothes; but one must conform to please, and I am very sure, that neither Mrs. Godfrey nor her handsome cousin would visit Kitty and Miss Palmer, if I had left the Venus in the grove."

"Why, what have you been doing with your statues, Rufus?"

"They cost me too much," quoth Rufus, "to think of destroying them — you have not an idea of the expence, so I let the Faunus and the Water-Nymph stay in their places, by the advice of Hamilton, and only removed the Venus."

"Pity!" cried I, "and where have you put her?"

"Safe enough," said he, "where only those may see her, who have an antique taste — in the oval recess of my study, where she stands most elegantly — the recess positively seemed made for her; and I have had a nice green Persian curtain fixed on a brass rod to slide occasionally before the recess. You have not an idea how the study is improved by it. — Libraries are proper places for statues."

"Was that Hamilton's taste or yours?"

"My own truly," cried he; "positively, my own."

"I thought so," said I; "I was sure you had an antique taste ever since that morning that Martha caught you in the washhouse taking away the flannel petticoat."

Here Rufus transfused ideas—he would not speak, being mindful of his friend Hamilton's *turpe dictu.* He moved as he leered, and, joining the ladies, renewed his demureness, and his sanctified phraseology. One such evangelical hy-

pocrite does more harm to the truths that may be found in the Bible than a dozen freethinkers. I shall keep him up a little longer, and then expose him to the Godfreys. He has met with a ridiculous accident, the account of which will come in here very well. It was this that enabled me to leave him in the hands of Lady Bab, who, by-the-bye, is not so much taken in by him as my sister and our other friends. It was a fortunate accident for you, whatever it was for him, as, if he could have sat on a horse, he would have accompanied me to Manor-House, and spoiled that delicious blush which was destined to send your blood in rapid waves *pulsing* to your heart.

The frost had set in very sharply before we left Bath, and still continues severe.—On the day we arrived, the housemaid was ordered to see the room prepared for Rufus well aired, and to warm his bed at night. He was in high spirits at the reception he met with, particularly from Lady Mount-Vernon; and at night before we separated, he took his glass of brandy and water, in the mix-

ture of which I observed that the crystal of the water had not much attenuated the amber colour of the brandy, and I presumed that he was preparing for a sound sleep. Whether it began to have a soporific effect before he meant it should, or from some other cause, I don't know, but Rufus retired the first, and nearly half an hour before we separated. Lady Mount-Vernon and Bab were gone, and I had sent off Lord Mariton and Aspell, who had beds with us for the night, to their respective apartments. My brother remained below talking to his man, and I was marching up stairs to my chamber, when I met the housemaid running down in a fright. As soon as she saw me, she cried out

"Oh! Sir! Oh, Mr. Vernon."

"What ails the girl?" — said I.

"Oh! Sir! the gentleman — the gentleman —"

"What gentleman?"

"The tall, slim, fair, red-headed gentleman."

"What of him?"

"Oh! Sir, I have warmed him — the warming-pan"—

"What the deuce do you mean, child?"

"It was quite a mistake. — Oh dear Sir, I shall never forgive myself if I have injured him. — I have warmed him, Sir. Pray think of my Lady's salve —" and away she darted on hearing Rufus roar.

I flew to his room, which was contiguous to mine. There he was, standing by a fire going out in his shirt, which he held off behind that it might not touch him. The maid had left her candle on the floor as she went in, and, unconscious of Rufus's danger, she had made more use of her hands than her eyes in untucking the clothes at the foot of the bed, and had rapidly inserted the dire machine.

Curled up by the cold like a dog on a rug, and set asleep by the brandy, the fire-charged pan came in contact with the roundest part of poor Rufus's body, and produced a roar, which Miss Broom took for a ghost; and she fled, leaving the mischievous instrument unextricated to its vengeance, and not recollecting till

she met me, that her fancied ghost might be the red-headed gentleman. There, sure enough, in the bed stuck the warming-pan; there at the door was the candle, and there at the dying fire stood the dismayed, groaning Rufus. I cannot help laughing at the recollection, as the worst is over, for it was serious at the time —but being over we may as well laugh.

"My dear fellow," said I, "what's the matter?"

"Oh oh-h!"

"Let me see, pray—"

"Oh-h-h! Don't touch it."

Upon examining the hurt, I found it was no serious injury; on which I said;

"It must be touched."

"Oh!" cried he, "not for the world."

"I know what will ease the pain," said I, recollecting the maid's advice to think of her Lady's salve.

Seeing it was only a little smarting, I would again have recommended *Eau de Cologne*, but I had too tender a heart, so I said;

"My dear Rufus, stand just as you are till I come back."

"I will," said he; "make haste."

It was intensely cold, and I stirred the fire for him before I left him. — While I was doing it, I wickedly asked him if he thought Lord Mariton or Aspell could be of any service; if so, I would bring them back with me.

"For Jesus' sake, don't," said he, and groaned.

"Be easy then," said I. — "I won't; and they shan't even know what has happened."

"Thank you! — make haste."

I found Mount-Vernon still in the room below — he had heard of something being the matter, and hearing that I was with the red-headed gentleman, he was staying to know what it was. — He was sorry, but could not help laughing. The waiting-women were with their ladies.

"Go yourself to Bab's door," said Mount-Vernon, "and ask her for some salve."

I took the hint.

"Bab," said I, knocking at her door, "I want to speak to you; I know you are not in bed yet."

The door opened on a jar, and out

popped Barbara's pleasant, round, ruddy face, surmounted with a man's double cotton night-cap. She knew something had happened.

"What's the matter, what's the matter?" cried she.

"More than you are aware of," replied I, with a serious face.

Bab opened the door, and came forward at the impulse of curiosity — she was in a flannel wrapping-gown.

"Come, now, tell me what's the matter, Lewy?"

"My dear Bab — I'll tell you to-morrow, but do, for Heaven's sake, give me some salve for the present."

"Tell me now," said she.

"One of the maids," said I, "has burnt poor Palmer almost to death."

"Law! How did she manage that?" quoth Bab.

"I can't stay telling you all the particulars now — do give me some salve."

"I will, if I have any — but, law! Lewy, how, and where, and with what is he burnt?"

"If I tell you these, will you give me the salve without asking any more questions?"

"Law! to be sure."

"How?"

"Grievously."

"What with?"

"A warming-pan."

"Where?"

"I'll tell you to-morrow — do, give me the salve."

"Go along — what do you talk to me about salve for; I have got no salve — go, and ask Lady Mount-Vernon; she has got plenty; I never keep any. — What should I do with it?"

"This is cruel of you, Bab."

"Pho! you fool! tell him to put a handful of salt in a bason of cold water, and use that."

She laughed and, retreating, slapped the door in my face. Mount-Vernon, who stood out of sight listening, with difficulty restrained his laughter till this dialogue was over; he then got some salve for me from his wife, and we both repaired to Rufus's chamber to relieve and comfort him. When he saw my brother, he did not know what to do with himself. — There he stood as I left

him, like his own Callipyges, as motionless, but not so devoid of sensation, still protecting the injured part from the touch of the linen that hung over it. Mount-Vernon said he was very sorry for the accident.

"Truly, my Lord, it is to be deplored."

"Vernon tells me that it will soon be well."

"It is to be hoped, my Lord, but I must say it was a wicked deed in the young Jezebel, who could not but have seen me; — I hope she will be properly punished — but I am in great pain."

He was evidently so at the moment, and therefore we could not then make it a subject of pleasantry. I spread the salve on some rag, and bound it on him; it gave him immediate relief. We said what we could to comfort him, and got him to bed.

The next was an awful morning to poor Rufus. He had had little sleep during the night; less, as he confessed, from pain, than from reflecting on the position he should stand in at Mount-Vernon and Manor-House. I went to him as soon as I was up. My knocking at his door woke him; I found him well enough to laugh and to be laughed at,

though sore. Having advised him to sleep another hour, and take his breakfast in his room, I was going to leave him to his rest, when he called me back.

"My good friend," said he, "do you think the thing will be known to the ladies?"

The occasion was irresistible.

"How shall we prevent it?" said I. "Are you so free of pain as not to betray it in walking?"

"I will bear any pain rather than it should be known to the ladies — though I feel some in one place where the skin is broken."

"Oh, as for that," said I, "the salve will completely heal it before night; you must dance."

"Oh! I *must* dance, if its only to show it's no such thing."

"That something is the matter it will be impossible to conceal. How shall we hide the place? The rag was got from the housekeeper, and the salve from Lady Mount-Vernon herself."

"Can't we put it all upon my thumb?"

"Let me look — a happy thought — but how came your thumb so burnt?"

"Why the jade left the pan in the bed, and I put my hand down to poke it away, but I was obliged to jump out at the bolster."

"Come, this is lucky — they say every evil has some good attending it; — this is a lucky burn of the thumb; we may now call the unfortunate part the thumb — go to sleep now; I'll come and see you after breakfast."

"Thank you," quoth he; "but I say, had not we better bind some rag about the thumb?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And," cried he, with a smile, "we will get a thumb-stall for night."

"Good bye," said I.

"But as to that girl," said he, "who has got me into this scrape, I do hope your brother the Lord will make a point of turning her away. — I would have her whipped at the cart's tail."

"Oh! my friend," said I, "it was an accident."

"An accident, Mr. Vernon! Damn her, she did it on purpose."

This was the first time I had heard the emphatic verb *damn* out of Rufus's mouth

— but it is one of the properties of familiarity to withdraw the veil that covers the heart of a hypocrite, and I neither thought the better nor the worse of him for it. The fellow's pretension to peculiar purity in a religion of which *forgiveness* is the basis — and, by the bye, the very best argument in favour of its truth, which, Darrell, you may keep in mind in your studies — had shown me his character before: — this want of mercy only added the view of a vindictive spirit, and I determined to make him suffer for it.

"The girl," said I, "is to be turned away this morning, if she is not gone already. — Now, Rufus, if she is not gone, my opinion is, that you had better beg for her."

"Beg for her, Mr. Vernon; beg for the fire-shoving monster that singed me!"

"Not for her sake," replied I; "she deserves to be broiled herself; but don't you see what will be the consequence to you?"

"Consequence," quoth he, "from a slut like that!"

"She," said I, "knows all; and, if

pushed to extremities, she will certainly tell all, and there will be no hiding it from the ladies."

"Eh! what?"

"Besides, my good friend," continued I, "there's no knowing how far the matter will go. — There are ballad-makers in every town; at Hereford I know two — nothing so easy — for instance, off-hand:

Though cruel his heart, his complexion was fair,
His stature was lofty, and red was his hair;
This beau, who from Hampshire to dancing was come,
Took a horror to Molly for burning his thumb.

"Lord! oh Lord!" exclaimed Rufus.

I went on.

"You are a poet yourself, and know that where *your* taste would be an hour adopting a rhyme, the journeymen poets do off hundreds by habit, never much caring about the delicacy of the jingle, and, unfortunately for you, a thumb-stall won't hide a rhyme, and there are so many to fit your case."

Poor Rufus was in an agony of transfusion.

"Shall I," continued I, "convince

you, by giving you another stanza off-hand."

"By no means, my friend — I *am* convinced — fly, I beseech you to my worthy lord, and intercede in the strongest terms you can use for poor Molly — tell him from me, that forgiveness is a Christian duty, and that I forgive her — do, run, do."

"I fear," said I, "it is too late, but I will do my best — meanwhile do you get some sleep, and, by repose and composure through the day, get yourself in proper çue for the ball; — you must absolutely dance to-night with Mrs. Godfrey, Miss Saville, and Lady Bab." I had got out of the room, and was shutting the door, when I heard him bawl out —

"For Jesus' sake! not Lady Bab."

I found Mount-Vernon, my sister, and Lady Barbara, at the breakfast-table — Lord Mariton and Aspell were frost-bound in bed —

"'Pon my word," said I, as I entered the room, "that poor fellow Palmer has hurt his thumb prodigiously."

"Choke your impudence," cried Bab,

"what business had you to come to me for salve?"

I swore that Mount-Vernon sent me — he that he never told me that Bab used salve; both of us telling truth like Æsop's two thieves. Lady Mount-Vernon asking seriously how he did, I made them all easy by assuring her that there was no harm done, and that I left him talking of the ball, and picking and chusing his partners. Bab laughed, but ended with saying:

"An't you ashamed now to play anybody such a trick as that?"

I was surprised by the sudden expression of this suspicion, though on a moment's reflection I did not wonder at her entertaining it; — and as I saw my sister's hope in her face, that it was not my contrivance, I thought it necessary to disavow it formally, and to convince her of its being completely accidental. She thanked me in her sweet, gracious manner, as if she were obliged to me, for its not being premeditated under her roof. — She is a most amiable creature. The conversation ended with our resolving to

favour the demonstration of the thumb-stall. You may suppose that, on Rufus's appearance, it was not easy for Bab to preserve her *serieux*: — as for me, though I was bound not to 'peach, I was not bound not to laugh. On this score, however, the day went off very well for Rufus; but he was ridiculously precise, and once was venturing on an atonement for following *my* task in sculpture, similar to his essay on Beau Nash, which I put a stop to by asking him if there was not a recess in his study at Hants Cottage.

In the evening we set out in proper time for Manor-House. The Mount-Vernons, Lady Barbara, and Lord Mariton in the coach; Aspell, Rufus, and I in the chariot. Rufus had managed very well at dinner to appear at his ease, and all the necessary compliments and condolences were paid to his *thumb*, for which Molly, out of gratitude for his intercession, or rather in penitence for her wicked fire-shoving precipitation — she being of the intercession as ignorant as the warming-pan, which had done the mischief — had provided a very handsome

black silk case, which she herself, while begging and receiving pardon, had gently fixed upon the thumb, and tied round his wrist in a handsome bow of black ribbon; but when he came to get into the chariot, the ease was not so clearly assumed.— Placing him and Aspell in the corners, I took the middle:—I no sooner sat down than he gave a loud, *Oh!*

"What's the matter, Sir?" cried Aspell.

"Nothing," replied he, "only our friend pressed in a little suddenly."

Aspell could not help laughing, though I declare he knew nothing of the matter, for I had religiously kept contract with Lady Mount-Vernon, whose thanks in the morning I considered as binding.—I put myself forward.—On going on, the motion of the carriage made Rufus bite his lips, accompanied now and then with a gentle, half-smothered *Oh!*, till entering upon the beginning of the first hill, the coachman not immediately abating his speed, I was thrown involuntarily back, and jammed between my companions,

which suddenly forced a loud and lengthened *Oh!* from the suffering one.

"Gently," cried I to the man, recovering my accommodating position.

Aspell turned his head round, and stared at Rufus.

"By the Lord!" exclaimed the latter, "I'd rather walk all the way."

"Why?" asked Aspell.

"Eh!" stammered the wincing youth: "Why? Because I'd rather warm my blood by walking, than perish by cold in this vehicle — o, o, o, o."

By the O's I mean an accompaniment to shuddering and chattering of teeth, to blind Aspell. Upon walking, up *the hill* at least, he was determined, till I reminded him that he had his dancing shoes on. He then bethought him of requesting to be made bodkin, and he took my place. He rode the rest of the way comparatively in Heaven, using the glass straps as a purchase, by means of which he managed to humour his posture the rest of the way.

The Ball! — I shall not keep you long in pumps — I wish to Heaven you had

yours on, and more profitably studying heavenly truths, in the steps of *your* AUGUSTA, all life, than in the despotic interrogations of Xantippe's ugly husband, all death and poison. It was a very pleasant ball in spite of the sharpness of the frost, the nipping of which was suspended in the rooms by large fires, constant motion, and good spirits — animal ones, I mean. Lady Bab never touches brandy, except that of her hunting pocket-flask on raw mornings, when the hounds lose scent. To hope that you will read on in the order I write, I must consent to write in the order you will read.

Well then — SHE — not Lady Bab — was all that you can imagine of beauty, and a thousand times more than I can picture. This must do for her person; and as for her white satin bodice, and gauze skirt, the plaits on her head, the shoes on her feet, the silk stocking on her ankle — I must not say leg — the bracelet on her arm, and the cross on her breast, all the innumerable episodical embellishments of beauty, I must thus

leave lumped, to come with but half the speed you require to the point, of how she did not happen to dance with Lord Mariton — and here in spite of your impatient forecast, in justice to my friend Rufus, — now don't damn him — remember your studies, and if you don't damn him before, I am sure you won't after — I have done him the justice to demand your eternal friendship for him in future, which you will give him as readily as you would at this moment give me a box on the ear, when you know your eternal obligation to him, for to him is due the praise and gratitude for HER not dancing with your compound of fop, lounger, and lord — and now for the "by what means?"

Some of the beaux of the ball were staying at Manor-House, and SHE was engaged five deep, when we arrived. — We had the start of the coach, and the first thing Rufus did, on entering the room, was to make his way, as soon as he got a glimpse of her, in a direct line, as fast as he could, in a half hobble, half frisk, to engage her; and he had the hap-

piness of being nominated the sixth of her *chevaliers*. I, less active than *your* friend, not having been wounded, only managed to secure the seventh, and Aspell was the fortunate eighth — but, as it turned out, we had not the *bliss* of dancing with her, for in came my lord, and he came in too for the ninth promise of dancing felicity. As the night advanced the happy candidates were scotched off one after another, and it was fast approaching to Rufus's turn, who had danced one dance with La Belle, and having suffered not a little for his gallantry, was reserving himself entirely for his *sixth* with Miss Saville, on whom, in spite of my *other attractions*, I kept my eye. I found her sitting out now and then when she ought to have been dancing. I divined that the protracting of her engagements was the motive : — I saw too that, with every politeness, she disliked and avoided Lord Mariton.

At length came Rufus's turn. — I observed his perturbation between the thoughts of his approaching honour, and the dread of what it doomed him to suf-

fer. He made his bow at the appointed epocha, and offered to lead her to her place.

"Will you allow me," said she, "to sit out this dance?"

"Gladly! — I mean, certainly," replied Rufus, whose features as well as his *gladly* plainly betokened a reprieve.

"Have you hurt your thumb, Mr. Palmer?" said she, observing Molly's silk case.

"An accident — a trifling wound.—"

"He spoke to her, but he gazed at me, who was standing at her side, over-preserving my gravity, the exertion for which he saw in my eyes, and by some convulsions of my cheeks, on which he looked, "for Jesus' sake!" as much as if he had spoke the words.

"How happened it?" said she.

Conceive what a question — Rufus never moved his eyes from mine, and could not move his tongue to her. I would have helped him, to please my sister, but I was obliged to desert him: — I must have laughed out-right if I had at-

tempted to speak. He was relieved by that dear woman, who said —

"He burned it accidentally in his room."

If Lady Bab had been by, instead of Lady Mount-Vernon, I should not have spared him — and when I think of his pretended sanctity, and his determined revenge on the maid, he does not deserve mercy. The conversation changed, and he got off then, but not through the night.

"How goes the thumb, Mr. Palmer?" met his ears now and then, with a significant look from Mount-Vernon — and Bab was wicked enough to make kind enquiries about it, and to advise his not enflaming it by dancing too much, — an advice he was disposed to take, even at the loss of the honour he had solicited. He was happy to hear his partner propose giving up a second and a third dance. More and more convinced of her motive, I rather thought of promoting her design than of urging my claim, which ranked next. — Supper was over, and still Rufus was her partner, and truly happy

I believe he was to hear her declare she wished to be excused dancing more.

"By all means," said he.

"Answer for yourself, my friend," said I; "I can only consent, if those after me do not take advantage of my consent, and I'll determine that directly."

She thanked me, but without knowing how much I deserved it. I went to Aspell and Mariton; the former hastened to declare his resignation himself:—Mariton was sullen.

"Certainly—it was as she pleased—he had no idea of its coming to his turn."

Though she had treated him in every respect as good manners required, he was piqued that he had been able to gain no particular attention from her. He long strove to single her out for the evening; but, all his exertions proving ineffectual, the stream of his passion took a contrary direction, and during the latter part of the night he pointedly avoided her.

I think, Darrell, you are now at your ease with respect to this milk-and-water Lord; and so, I assure you, you may be

as to all the Lords and Commoners of Godfrey's acquaintance, good, bad, and indifferent, that is, for the present. I will repeat it to you: my firm opinion is, that she may be *yours;* but if you want any more *specific indications,* I own I do not see how they are to be obtained, but by putting the question to herself. We shall now soon be in town, and I trust you will not persist in secluding yourself from our society.

This immense volume of a letter calls loudly for a conclusion, or I could yet amuse you with some of the other characters at Mrs. Godfrey's ball; — but as to the thing itself; a ball is a ball, and I could not make more of it. If I had the pleasure of *not* dancing with Miss Saville, I had also the double pleasure of dancing twice with her beautiful, lovely cousin; no matter: — in most balls, and this was no exception, there is as you know a certain portion of Vortical *Nudes* and *Spartans.* Miss Saville was shocked. — They are out of their places in modest company; — there they shock even me. — One of the

Nudes made a downright attack on Rufus. Her first question to me about him was, " who is the thumb?" —

" A man of fortune near Alton in Hampshire." —

This was enough: — she made a dead set, and the interior of her bosom was as little concealed as the exterior.

And now, adieu! I think I have left no points of your letter unanswered this time, except perhaps as to reading Plato. The name, though great in most things, has given coinage to an epithet, the idea of which is rather repulsive to my nature. It seems, indeed, to agree with your present humour of being unworthy of any but a Platonic affection from the *Goddess of Love*. Had you chosen the Goddess of Hunting, or even Lady Bab, for such a German passion, there might have been some consistency; but with such a creature! I'll read Plato, by-and-bye, when I am rich enough to marry, or if ever I find myself in the humour of the suicide of Utica; and if neither of these happen before I am tired of the Vortex, I'll begin to re-

vise my Greek when that begins to pall. Seriously, you have inclined me to the study, but I have not virtue enough to set about it just now. — Once more, adieu!

Ever yours,

L. VERNON.

NOTE

From Augusta to Sir F. Darrell, in reply to his delivered by Mr. Vernon.

Miss Saville thanks Sir Francis Darrell for the note delivered to her by Mr. Vernon. — The contents of it cannot but be most agreeable, and are very flattering, to her. Nothing could give her more pleasure than the complete success of Sir Francis in the pursuit which he treats as a *Task* set by her. He has her prayers for it, and also those of her family.

LETTER XLI.

Sir Francis Darrell to Mr. Vernon.

London, Jan.

MY DEAR VERNON,

After losing you so long, I am happy to find you again. I could not divine that my letter was lying unopened on your table at Mount-Vernon, while you were flying about the country; and I cannot but own that I was rather sore at your silence. What sport does Fancy make of human feelings! It is a faculty peculiar to man: nay the metaphysicians tell you that it is not the gift of God, like our other faculties, but a compound made up by himself from some of the others, just as he makes gun-powder by mixing nitre, charcoal, and sulphur; and very similar too they are in their properties. A certain quantity, moderately prepared with learning, but here and there left to itself in the compartments

of the brain, forms those beautiful fireworks we call Poets, Novelists, and Merry-Andrews: — in gross and unprepared, it lets off those destructive detonating explosions which produce madmen and fools: — it delights or destroys.

Mischievous imp! where could he have got the art of turning pleasure to horror, utility to destruction, good to evil? Where? It could not be from his Creator, for God is good: — without goodness there can be no God; — whatever appearances may say to the contrary, if he *is* at all, he must be good. In this it is not necessary to say *errare malo cum Platone*, it is the dictate of common sense; and, by-the-bye, there is nothing in Plato to equal the sublimity of the Hebrew laconisms in the book of Genesis. "And GOD saw that it was GOOD," is exquisitely repeated after various acts of creation. — "Let there be light, and there was light, and HE saw that it was *good.*" — "Let it be, and it was so." — "And GOD saw every thing that he had made, and it was *very*

good." The rapidity of the FIAT, and GOOD, the immediate effect, surpasses all I have ever met, in the expression of divine grandeur. Nor can it, on reflection, be doubted that what a God creates must be good: — but then, how is reflection contradicted by the senses! We see, we feel, we know that every thing he has created is *not* good; — that there is more *evil* than good, and that man, said to be the last and noblest of his terrestrial creation, is a compound of malignity and misery; that his vice is real, and his virtue imaginary; that his happiness is momentary and uncertain — his wretchedness certain and sure. What is to be done? Must I embrace the doctrine of a devil? In truth I see no alternative: I must either retread my steps, and again lose the God I have found, or I must believe in the devil. I am unwilling to give up the hold I have acquired, but the devil shakes my grasp. I must think. I will tell you more of my studies by-and-bye: at present I will return to the thought, which led to these reflections.

What sport does Fancy make of human feelings! How has it been tossing mine about for the last three weeks! I have connected all possible mishaps and woeful results with your silence. The confirmation of the story of Lady Betty, supported by the newspaper paragraph, which I saw, and which some malignant friend of mine probably aimed at me; the effect at Manor-House; — the advantage to Lord Mariton; his Molly face smirking at the joke; the complacent pity of Lady Mount-Vernon; Lady Barbara's view-hollo; the regret of the Godfreys and Saville; the melancholy conviction of the loveliest of women; and your reluctance to inflict wounds till you could collect some balm to assuage the pain — were the floating ideas of my brain. Other will-o'-the-wisps in the bogs of Fancy, misled me at times different ways, while simple truth lay unheeded before me, and the probability of my letter not having reached you never entered my head. What a dangerous and destructive compound is Fancy! I think it is settled that the discovery of gun-powder, however para-

doxical the assertion seemed at first, has rendered war less murderous; but with respect to Fancy, the reverse conclusion evidently takes place; for, since the invention of that Faculty, it has produced infinitely more madmen than poets, though lately, indeed, there seems to be a wonderful press among the fanciful crowd, in rushing into the theatre of life, to avoid the pit of the former, and to mount into the upper gallery of the latter, whence, in their heat and eagerness for places, Fate and Fancy topple them over into their appropriate receptacle.

I have read your delightful letter, my dear Vernon, with the lively and varied sensations it is calculated to excite. Sweet of itself, it was rendered more so by its contrast to my gloomy anticipations. It has relieved me of a great weight; but I must be ungrateful enough to tell you that it inspires no hope; — no hope of a happiness you so kindly predestine for me; of a happiness which even Fancy in her best humour could not parallel. I am not skipping and curvetting out of its way; — I am not congeeing, or fritter-

ing, or doubting: I tell you seriously, that neither *my* impediment nor *hers* can be removed — yet, for it would be folly to disown it to such a friend, I love, — love as *you* say I do, love to distraction — to distraction, because I love with despair, not with hope.

"My Augusta!" How delightful the sounds! how impossible to realize them! I know, Vernon, that you would not blame me, and that most men would so act, if I were to yield me to the delicious colourings of Hope, which your friendly pencil has painted. I should not blame you, or them; but I have within me an, it may be overweaning, principle, that calls imperiously upon me to resist this passion. It is not, my dear Vernon, a Vortical passion raised by selfish, transient pleasure. My question is not, can she make me happy? but, can she be happy with me? Alas! my answer still is — she cannot. Even if all your *indications* of her favourable feelings were acknowledged proofs of love, it is love of an ideal object. To surmount my impediment, she must first hear horrors, and then swear she loves me: — the thought

distracts me; — the impossibility drives me mad: — "My Augusta!" delicious, empty words! — "She will absolve you." Never: — she will not even hear my confession. Her note — yes, Vernon, I kissed it — might seduce my imagination into a hope that, ignorant of my objections, she would be pleased to have her own removed: — say that mine could be swept away by the feelings of remorse and repentance, which had filled my heart exclusively till I knew her, how is the impediment on her side to be removed? Shall I deceive her? tell her that I have faith solvent enough to digest all the miracles of the New Testament? and the supernumerary ones in the tradition of her own church?

Your advice is good; — you say, "convince yourself as far as you can, and take the rest upon trust." This, my dear Vernon, is not only a principle as to religious creeds; it is the principle in belief of every kind. Give me a man of known truth, one incapable of deceiving me; and I will believe his *unaccountable* assertions; I will take them

upon trust; but if I hear him utter *contradictory* assertions, I may as well be required to believe that two and two make five, as that he is not an impostor, or out of his senses. Still I must own that some things appear contradictory, which experience shows not to be so. When we are first told that heat hardens wax, and that heat melts wax, it is a contradiction in terms; yet we know that it is the case; that the heat of the sun has the one effect, and the heat of fire has the other. It therefore requires great discrimination in rejecting all that at first appears even contradictory.

But to come to myself. — It does not appear likely that I shall ever surmount these difficulties; and I would sooner die than unite her to falsehood, by professing what I did not think. There is no corruption more hideous than hypocrisy. I know you don't advise this, when you say, "take upon trust," nor that my convictions should be swayed by my passions — they never can — they never shall; it would be courting misery. I am determined to investigate sincerely for my *own sake*, and to endeavour to stifle my pas-

sion for *hers*. But I do not see the necessity of determining so suddenly as you say.—Never be in a hurry; — always take time: — you are all coming to town. You I shall see daily; perhaps I may see them once or twice during the winter. How delightful would it be to learn TRUTH from her lips!

I am glad she saw the Bramblebears at Bath. *They* are coming to town about the middle of the month: I shall certainly avoid them as much as possible, and rather than that the idea of an attachment should be revived in the minds of the Godfreys, I will fly into Northamptonshire — to the North Pole, rather than have it revived in that of their cousin.

I read your letter again and again; I have never received one that gave me half the pleasure. Your incidents, your epithets, the whole style when you speak of Miss Saville, all is calculated to charm. Lady Barbara's barbarous attack is so sweetly defeated by my beautiful champion, and the malice of Mariton by yourself. The hearing of Godfrey's coach a mile off — your ethereal draughts — the

unexpected flash of the electric possessive pronoun coupled with the elegant name of *Augusta* — your moulding me into a being worthy of her — your just delineation of her character, formed with dignity above *losing* her heart, though possessed of tenderness to bestow it — your admirable little Platonic dialogue, proving from *Eau de Cologne* the existence of the soul — and, above all, that BLUSH! It should have been told in numbers:

> Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro
> Si quis ebur; vel mixta rubent ubi lilia multa
> Alba rosa: tales virgo dabat ore colores.

But what do I say? What is Virgil's Tyrian-stained ivory; what his lilies and roses, compared with the image raised by that incomparable passage of your letter, of one of the Graces, in the form of her whom you have dared to call my Augusta, diffusing her blush on the neck of a Love? I think I see her nestling her lips on the soft and hollowed shoulder of her laughing little cousin. Alas! alas! what am I about? And what is it you mean to make of me, Vernon? It is as you say; I never was in love before.

How justly do you distinguish between that pleasant kind of feeling which so generally passes for love, and that passion, approved by the judgment, which fills and expands the heart! Yes, you have opened my eyes to the state of mine, and I thank you;—it puts me the more completely on my guard, and determines me never, never to deceive her, who so fills and expands it. She shall know me, Vernon—know how unworthy I am of her; and I will only beg her not to abhor me.

But I will not be precipitate — I will pursue my TASK. The progress I *have* made in it, though little, is of unspeakable comfort to me, and I will not resign it. — *There is a God, and there ought to be an immortality.* The BEING I yet very imperfectly figure to myself by that name must be omniscient, must consequently know the sincerity with which I am now applying myself to obtain a just idea of HIM, and of his will respecting man. This thought is pregnant with a hope I never had before;—he will not desert his creature who does not desert him; and though, when I left him in my youth

he left me too, he will listen now to my entreaty, for he knows

I have no thought to mock his throne with prayer
Wrung from the coward crouching of despair,

but offered with a sincerity that dares challenge even his eye.

You say, Vernon, that it is not time for you to think. I am no preacher, my friend; I have no intention of becoming one; but if by experience of any manly gratification I can recommend it to you, I will not be afraid or ashamed of doing it. If thought were an enemy to youthful *happiness*, I would not have you think; —it is not to *happiness* that it is an enemy. We are nearly of the same age; we have been companions in thoughtlessness —I use too lenient a word, but I will not bore you. — You are, compared to me, Hyperion to a Satyr; you have no livid stains upon your breast. — But you are losing your advantage; — you are on a precipice. If you will not yet think on the serious subjects which occupy me — think, I beseech you, think on your own danger of planting stings like mine

in your bosom. You tell me I am in love — so I fear are you. Oh! how gladly and gratefully would I encourage in you a love like mine! I cannot encourage yours.

Once more I will mention Mrs. Godfrey to you. You now seldom speak of her to me, and never as freely as you did last year. Circumstances have given a serious cast to my part in our correspondence. You must not be afraid of me, Vernon; I will spare you — I ought to spare you. It may be true, that it is the part of friendship to show us our faults; but to friendship tenderness is as essential as truth: — a rough, plain dealer is rather a friendly monitor than an admonishing friend, and the manner too frequently counteracts the matter. — Besides, from *me* asperity would be absurd. I shall not surprise you with the common-places against a pursuit in which you engaged through an idle ambition, and in which I see you now bound by a dangerous fascination. The only argument I will use is this; you are possessed of a blessing of the highest nature in the friendship of the Manor-House family, now

including Saville and his charming daughter; if you do not immediately extinguish the desire you are vainly fostering, I say *immediately*, you will lose all—you will be banished from that Eden; you will become an outcast from the valuable part of society; you will sink into a Darrell, hating and hated; and, though you can never be as wretched, the worm of lost happiness will gnaw at your heart.

You have hitherto escaped, because you have trifled where trifling is only laughed at, that is, with trifling creatures—with your Vortical dames; but you will not escape the rock on which your passions are blowing you, unless you put about in time. There is a property in virtue, where it exists—and I begin to believe that there is more of it in the paths unfrequented by us than I supposed —which attracts and assimilates hearts that have any affinity whatever with it; but it possesses also a benumbing property on hearts over which it has no influence. I am sure that yours is endowed with a sufficient affinity, but it is at present counteracted by an artificial magnet of

great power. Between these two influences much depends upon your own exertion. I have done on this subject. — Be content, Vernon, with *friendship*, and you will assimilate daily with this virtuous, happy group; but if you ask for *love*, you are benumbed for the rest of your life.

I will not finish without thanking you for the lighter, but very pleasant, parts of your letter. Your Vortical observations at Bath; — Beau Nash and Rufus; — the warming-pan; — Molly on the stairs; — Rufus at the fireside; — Lady Bab's nightcap; — an evangelical sinner frightened into Christian forgiveness; — the chariot scene; — the ball; — Mariton's disappointment; — the *Nudes* and *Spartans;* — all exquisite. Thanks! Continue to unite this strain with the more interesting parts of your letters. With you I will laugh still. Adieu!

Ever yours,

F. Darrell.

LETTER XLII.

Mr. Vernon to Sir Francis Darrell.

Mount-Vernon, Jan. 15th.

MY DEAR DARRELL,

THOUGH my pen will now soon give place to a more voluble instrument, it shall perform its duty once more before I quit Mount-Vernon for town. The Manor-House family leave the country some day next week, and purpose to spend a couple of days at Oxford. The family here set out a few days after them. I shall precede both, and have already written to have my apartments in Piccadilly prepared for me. — I shall come to you the very day I arrive.

Your letter gives me great pleasure; your language indeed continues positive on the topic of *marriage*, but then it flows so naturally on that of *love*, that my

hope of you is considerably encreased. You have well described FANCY. She is undoubtedly a gunpowder goddess in modern times, and delights occasionally in blowing up a victim in those regions of *Il Penseroso*, where she has arbitrary power; and if you do not take care, you will be the next. In her pleasant haunts of *L'Allegro* she is never cruel: her combustibles are all made into Catherine wheels, rockets, Roman candles, Indian crackers, and a variety of other brilliant affairs, but not in the least dangerous. I must persuade you to give up your quarters in the vicinity of her powder-mills, and come and take your abode with us: —

> Where, I ween, a beauty lies,
> The cynosure of neighb'ring eyes.

What a train had Fancy set to blow you up! I am glad I was in time to save you, and I hope that you will in future *eschew* MELANCHOLY,

> Of Cerberus and blackest midnight born.

Haste to the nymph with whom we see
Jest and youthful jollity;
Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks, and wreathed smiles;
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek:
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come live with her, and live with me,
In unreproved pleasures free.

I think your studies proceed well; — already they comfort you. — This is *multum in parvo*; but I beseech you mix *gaieté de cœur* with them. You will find it true wisdom; it is the alternation that gives relish to both. By-the-bye, I am sorry you have only got to the devil; — it is an ominous halt.— I wish you had got past him, or stopped a little to bait on the other side. I beseech you, get beyond him as soon as you can; and if he does not stop you altogether, I'll have a tussle with him myself — by-and-bye.

Deceive her! No! I would become her champion myself, and undeceive her by striking off the mask. Nor is she to be deceived. My advice was to use your *reason* in what is *material*, and not to be fastidious in what is *immaterial*. I con-

fess that if your union depends upon *your* becoming a *Roman Catholic*, I think it will never take place — but it depends upon no such thing. I believe, however, that it depends upon your becoming *sincerely* a Christian. I have been thinking how you will manage, if you proceed so slow, to get married before you are old people. Why, you have got no farther than the third chapter of Genesis; but let me see if I can't give you a lift here. — Upon reflection, you are in the New Testament already — for is not the coming of Christ the consequence of Lucifer's manœuvres in that very third chapter? and thus the Religion you are in search of is coeval with the creation of the world. I think you may make something of this hint. It should at least carry you to the typical intended sacrifice of the patriarch's son. Mind you acknowledge your obligation to me as far as a hint goes, no more, for I have not time to go deep into the reasoning upon it; *non agilis fio ;* — but,

Nunc in Aristippi furtim præcepta relabor,
Et mihi res, non me rebus submittere conor.

I am glad my light sketches amuse you — How odd it is that there should be any doubt about *a soul*, when a little *Eau de Cologne* can prove it. Where it resides is another question; if that should happen to be among your puzzles, remember where Sir Walter Raleigh found it:

Philosophers pretend to tell
That, like a hermit in a cell,
The soul doth in the body dwell:
But I, who am not over-wise,
Think it exists in Chloe's eyes;
Thence to her lip it frequent stole,
For there I kiss'd her very soul.

There is, however, some sophistry in this, for if the soul moves from one part of the body to another according to sensation, it may be argued that it follows painful as well as pleasurable feeling, in which case it may be found in the toe of a gouty man. — Now though I have no objection to have seen and heard it on Lady Bab's lips when she kissed your Augusta, I must be excused from ever consenting to find it, where it suffered so grievously in Rufus. By-the-bye, you

don't seem to have been affected at all with the said smack of Lady Bab's, but to be more taken with her night-cap. She is a good humoured creature, but a little glib with her tongue.

You make no enquiry for any lady after the fatigues of the ball — but I will suppose you do, and tell you the result of mine. I rode over to Manor-House next day. I found both the ladies well, and talking — not of the politics or anecdotes of the ball, but — of Sir Francis Darrell. — Mr. Saville was present; Godfrey was on horseback with his guests, for exercise.

"We were talking of your friend Sir Francis," said Saville; "How different do I find the man from his character! And it is extraordinary that we can trace nothing against him. As to his personal conduct — his modesty, his reserve, his caution, are really even overstrained. Of what does he accuse himself, and why does he act in this manner?"

What could I possibly say, Darrell? I said that I could ascribe it to nothing but a tincture of melancholy acquired by

habit in avoiding society, to which some early circumstances of your life had given you a disgust. I added, that I was convinced it was not in your nature, and that you only wanted the company of friends whom you could esteem, to restore you to what Nature intended you to be.

Mrs. Godfrey spoke of the day you had passed with them at Grove Park, and in terms of you that I was a little jealous of. But was *her cousin* altogether silent? No, Darrell, she was not — she had herself given rise to the conversation by referring to your note, and hers in reply. She said, without the least scruple, or blush, or fear of her sentiment being attributed to the passion of love, that, " you had but to give fair play to your understanding to be one of the most exalted of men."

And these are the people you shun. — I cannot bear to think of it — it makes me mad. — Expect to find me so, when I dart in upon you at May Fair; and prepare for me — not a strait waistcoat, but —

a remedy; and that you may, by the charm of a single sentence—by assuring me that you will cultivate the friendship offered you, even if you reject the love, the existence of which I have so clearly indicated to you. If, in addition to this *Recipe*, you would but consent to court Bab for the winter, the cure would not only be complete, but crowned with inexpressible delight; and conceive how fully you would convince her that her suspicions respecting Lady Betty were the idle fancies of her brain. Bab looked very handsome in the cotton night-cap, and, if it would be any argument to you in favour of my proposition, I'll get you a sight of it, and her head in it, either by another application for salve, or by calling fire at her door before she gets into bed.

I have got rid of Rufus; he left me a few days after the Ball at Manor-House, and sooner than he intended, I know, from an irresistible look of intelligence that met his eyes, wherever he turned them; but the intelligibility of it was so kept under by the corrected muscles of

the servants' faces, that he half persuaded himself it was nothing more than his suspicion. I saw him eyeing them all by turns from the corner of his eye; besides which Mount-Vernon and Bab tormented him with civility.

"I am sorry, Mr. Palmer," says my brother, with a dry look as if he had forgotten his disaster, "I am sorry this frost prevents our hunting; you should have the bay mare; she is not so hard to manage as the horse you rode when you were down here before."

"Law! Mount-Vernon, how can you talk so?" cries Bab, "don't you see Mr. Palmer's thumb?"

"I beg his pardon, I had quite forgot," replied he: "But why not? It's the whip thumb, I see. He does not want his right hand to manage his bridle."

"Truly so, my Lord," said Rufus, who thought he must say something, "truly so; and if it was not for the frost—"

"How is the barometer, Bab?" cries

Mount-Vernon, with a look of hope, which Rufus accompanied with a look that anticipated a meaning in those words which to him were rather obscure. Bab, to whom the meaning, both direct and equivocal, was well known, answered that the silver was sinking fast —"

"You don't tell it me?" cried Mount-Vernon, with joy in his countenance. "Then the scent may lie to-morrow — that mare's a gentle creature, Mr. Palmer — I would not put you upon her else."

Rufus, comprehending by degrees that the sinking of the silver had something to do with the opening of the weather, stole a look all round to see if any of us suspected the feelings of which he was conscious; he saw nothing to make him suppose it. Aspell was with us, but Mariton was gone.

"Pho!" said his female plague, "why do you offer the mare to Mr. Palmer? He had better not ride, I'm sure."

He looked at me for help — "I said I did not think that there would be an im-

mediate change of weather" — this was confirmed by Aspell's saying:

"I believe, Lady Barbara, you are mistaken; I rather think the silver has risen within this hour."

"May be so," replied she; "I won't be positive."

Rufus, set once more at ease, talked big, and was sorry he could not have another day's hunt with his Lordship and her Ladyship, which so trifling an affair as his thumb should not have prevented.

During this purgatory of Rufus's, Lady Mount-Vernon said little, in which I followed her example; for, though I could have taken pleasure in teazing him, I had much more in contemplating her, whose looks in silence spoke her soul; — they did not say; "don't do this, for it displeases me:" but "I feel uneasy at the uneasiness of another, and pained still more from his being my guest." She has a sweet disposition, and I swear to you I believe my heart has been made better since she

became my sister, by the influence of her manners. There is something very pleasing in the affection I feel for her; there is in it the softness and the tenderness of the passion of love without its anxiety, its hope, its fear, its restless desire. It is a peculiar affection, differing as well from friendship as from love; esteem is its basis, but it is more allied to sensation than friendship is; it is, perhaps this pure excitement which constitutes that family-love infused by nature in the blood of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, whom she leads to contemplate one another with a degree of ardour not essential to friendship. With this warm, but pure, affection, I contemplate this virtuous admirable woman, as much as if she had been born my sister. And here, in gratitude for your concluding admonition, I will say to you that it has made me wish that this was the affection I felt for your Augusta's cousin. It is all I can say at present.

You *shall* know more of the Mount-Vernons; but we must not let my sister

humanize us so much as to give up Rufus, who deserves a rougher friendship still than mine. I believe he would have staid till now at Mount-Vernon, but for the terror of the bay mare, which my brother took him and Aspell to see. As soon as they returned to the house, Rufus, in going through the hall, visited the barometer, and thrice in less than an hour ejaculated:

"I wonder if the silver stands."

These symptoms suggested a wicked notion to Mount-Vernon: he, unobserved, raised the index, and meant, on Rufus's next ejaculation, to propose his looking; but Lady Bab, happening to come in first, and having taken a look at the glass in the hall, exclaimed,

"Law! Mount-Vernon; I tell you the silver is sinking—go and see yourself."

"Let me," says Rufus.

"By all means."

"Half an inch at least," roared the astounded dupe, from the hall.

He fidgetted to and from the barometer the rest of the day, and, suddenly recollecting indispensable business

in town, ordered his man to have a post-chaise at the door by day-light.

Adieu! — You will see me in a few days.

Ever yours,

L. VERNON.

LETTER XLIII.

Augusta to Angelica.

London, Jan. 27th.

MY DEAREST ANGELICA,

I AM in daily expectation of your answer to the long letter I wrote to you nearly two months ago at Manor-House: in the mean time I will begin another, to be concluded and dispatched on the arrival of yours. I think of you daily, Angelica, and never fail to mention you in my prayers. When shall I be happy enough to embrace you again? My father has promised me to write soon, and urge our dear Marchese to visit England in the spring; and, if he cannot bring the family at present, at least to allow you to come to me. I intend to add a few lines with so pressing an entreaty, that he will not be able to refuse

me. I know how well he loves me, and he knows how well I love him too, and my dear Marchesa, who, with your kind good aunt will unite their influence in obtaining such happiness for their absent Augusta. Remember, Grove Park is the English home of our Pisani, and the house in which I am now writing shall be their town-house, for so again and again have said both George and Caroline, who delight me by talking of you often.

The more the characters of these affectionate cousins of mine open upon me, the more do I love them; and I long to make them your relations, for you are my sister, and as such they are eager to receive you. We are now in Hanover-square for the winter, but only just arrived, and I know nothing yet of London, except the incessant rattle of carriage-wheels, and the occasional clatter of knockers — a noise at the door of a house, the dexterity in making which is one of the accomplishments of a London footman. I meant to have begun my letter at Manor-House, but we were too much

engaged during the last week of our stay in the country. I will now return to the subjects which have interested me there, and which will, therefore, be interesting to my dear Angelica wherever I am, or wherever she is.

You will have seen, my dearest sister, how much Sir Francis Darrell occupies of my last letter, and have observed that he occupied much of my thoughts. New circumstances, far from lessening, have increased the interest I take in this extraordinary man. You know that, in addition to gratitude, all that I saw or heard of his actions in Northamptonshire raised my esteem for him to a very high degree, in spite of the awkward appearances against him at Malvern Wells. Conceive how delighted I was to learn that they were, indeed, but appearances, and that his meeting there with Lady Betty Bramblebear was, at least on his side, purely accidental. I was assured of this by Mr. Vernon, with whom I have made you acquainted by my letters. This gave me great pleasure; but it would be difficult for me to tell you how much that pleasure

was increased, on his informing me that his friend was seriously applying himself to the study of those truths, which only are wanting to lead him to as much perfection as human nature can attain in its present state. When he left us at Grove Park, he went to his house in London, where he has since spent his time chiefly in his library. I felt great joy, which I scrupled not to indulge, from the conviction of its being independent of love; for I thought of him, as of a noble mind exploring and finding the real paths of happiness. As of a lover I could not think of him; for, even allowing that every obstacle were removed, he had never given me the least reason to consider him in that light; — of course, it could never enter my head. I thought of him, indeed, as my preserver; and that, I own, was a relation sufficiently interesting, to increase the pleasure arising from the more general motive.

I was, however, doomed to have my joy disturbed; and this was done so suddenly, and in such a manner as really to make me sick at heart. Caroline had

left me to spend an hour with Lady Mount-Vernon; while with her, Lady Barbara Lewis and Mr. Vernon came in. I have already given you some idea of Lady Barbara. She is good-humoured, but has little command of her tongue. Lady Mount-Vernon had mentioned Sir Francis, of whom I spoke as I usually do. Lady Barbara for a joke, for she is incapable of acting from a bad motive, warned me against him, and introduced the story of his attachment to a married woman. Mr. Vernon contradicted it, and defended his friend, upon which, for the jest's sake, she appealed to me as a witness of his improper conduct at Malvern with Lady Betty Bramblebear. I was a little angry, and protested against such false reports. Lady Mount-Vernon did the same, when Lady Barbara, in excuse for herself, said it was natural for her to believe what she heard, when confirmed by what she had seen *with her own eyes.*

This gave me a pang very different from anger, and I fear it was visible, for she was sorry, and would make friends

with me in her abrupt way. Lady Mount-Vernon softened the conversation, and I was resuming the coolness which I am fortunate enough seldom to lose, when my mind was again thrown into a degree of irritation, by a circumstance which appeared to me very extraordinary at the time. I must here tell you that, among the acquaintances of the Vernons, there is a Lord Mariton, who, by the way, has offered me his title, a man of few and feeble recommendations.

Lady Barbara's reports were scarcely got rid of, when this Lord comes in with a newspaper, containing a paragraph so evidently pointing out Sir Francis Darrell and Lady Betty Bramblebear, that there was no mistaking it; stating that they had eloped between Cheltenham and Bath, and were on their way to the continent. But the names not being inserted in the paragraph, Lord Mariton thought proper to supply them, on which he was called upon by Mr. Vernon, who put him in mind that Sir Francis was his friend. This Lord gave as an authority for his mentioning the name, the talk of a house

at Hereford, and undertook to contradict the report upon the request of Mr. Vernon, who declared that he had just received a letter from Sir Francis Darrell, and knew that he was particularly engaged in London. I soon after left Mount-Vernon with my cousins, who came for me.

I confess, Angelica, that I was conscious of a considerable agitation; but, as there was no appearance of its being noticed, I trust there was no false inference drawn. I fear the feelings, with which my preserver has inspired me, would not be understood by the world, and that my anxiety about him would be attributed, as usual, to the common passion which a woman, solicitous for the welfare of a man, is said to feel! Oh! how little would they know me, who should say so of me. Were he at the remotest part of the world, were he already married to some happy woman, my solicitude would still be of the same nature. Still should I pray for his happiness in this life, and more anxiously for his conversion, that he might be happy

in that which is to come. This was the state of my feelings towards Sir Francis Darrell at that time, and yet is, though, from subsequent events, they are accompanied with hope instead of painful apprehension. These events you shall hear; but I must first lay my mind open to you, under its painful impressions.

For many months it had been occupied with the unfortunate state and character of a man to whom I could not be indifferent, though I could guard my heart from the weakness of passion. His amiable manners at Grove Park, his unbounded generosity, the love of his tenantry, had wiped from my imagination, if not from my memory, that blot which I had seemingly witnessed when I saw him gallop rudely by our carriage in the vale of Worcester; and the observations of Lady Mount-Vernon, and Mr. Vernon, had convinced me that I was deceived; was it not natural then, my dear Angelica, to feel doubly on hearing that I was not deceived, that he was rushing on to ruin, that he was a lost, an abandoned creature? It shocked me in such a manner,

Angelica, that I could not sleep for thinking of it: I lost my appetite; I was attacked with head-aches; in short, my health seemed to be threatened; my father and my cousins were alarmed; I strove against it, but without success, and it was proposed, that we should make an immediate excursion to Bath.

The uneasiness I caused roused me. I reflected upon myself as being very weak to suffer my feelings to overcome me in this manner. I became ashamed of it, and this counteracted my disorder. The journey, the change of scenes, the novelty of Bath, and the perpetual flow of the company, aided the struggle I made to conquer myself, and in less than a week I was perfectly recovered.

This is a true account, Angelica, of your sister's feelings and their effects. That I am very solicitous for the welfare, and more particularly for the conversion, of my preserver, I do not deny; but surely, my dear sister, I am not so weak a creature as not to be able to wish a man well, without falling in love with him. Tell me not that I am in love, Angelica;

— there are such reasons why I should not be so, that, knowing them, you must confess that it is impossible. In the first place, he is an Infidel: — that is, *was*, for I have yet to learn what progress he has made during the last month. How you will be delighted to hear that he has made any progress in belief! — but I anticipate, — I was saying that his being an infidel is one reason; then the life he is said to have led; then the secret of the urn and its hollow pedestal; and, lastly, the evident indifference of his heart respecting me, — for, were it otherwise than indifferent to me, would he avoid me and my friends? Would he so easily devote himself to study, and not think of me? Weigh all these reasons, and ask yourself, my dearest Angelica, if it be possible for me to yield my heart before it is sought: — no, my sister knows me better.

You will naturally expect from me some account of Bath, but I must be brief, as I am impatient to take you back to Manor-House. Indeed you already, from our books, and from what we heard

together before I left Signa, know enough of it to excuse my brevity. It is a beautiful, clean, and commodious town, originally the resort of invalids, but now, next to London, the centre of fashion. It seems to be a property of all the invalid places over the world to attract fashionable and idle people. Bath is recommended to gouty persons; but for half a dozen pair of crutches, and as many wheeling easy-chairs, you may count hundreds and thousands of dancing-pumps aud saddle-horses.

In all the public rooms there is great elegance, great taste, displayed. We went to a ball at each of the rooms; the general *coup-d'œil*, and the vast assemblage of handsome, well-dressed persons, give a high idea of the beauty and fashion of England; I was charmed, and continued so, in spite of considerable disgust, which a minuter inspection of some of the female part of the company created. I really blushed, as I looked at them; but they seemed to have no shame in appearing in public half naked. I have seen no indecency equal to this either in

Italy or in France. In the latter country I have sometimes observed the back of a woman too much exposed, but they have the modesty to cover their bosoms. This attention to decency shows not only modesty but true taste; for it inspires what dress aims at, admiration; whereas this indecent exposure cannot but raise disgust; they who cannot attract by conversation, or the charm of beautiful features, resort to this imaginary expedient as a subsitute, and foolishly think that impudence can supply at once the place of beauty and of wit.

But I must beg you, my dear Angelica, not to allow your imagination to do injustice to my countrywomen, by taking this account as characteristic of them — no indeed — an English woman, with the greatest personal beauty, unites the greatest modesty, and her claim to admiration is supported by good sense. The fact is that the generality of English women have distinguished understandings, and it is principally those who have little or none, or those who are deserters of virtue, that thus defy the opinion of the rational

part of society. Their number is comparatively small, yet some of them are to be seen in almost all companies; but I have been told they do not hold their footing there long. — When virtue is once dismantled of the dignity which fortifies it, it is seldom preserved. Though these observations have occurred to me in speaking of Bath, I have found room for them elsewhere, and they were not inapplicable at our Herefordshire balls and visits. These females form a peculiar class, mingling every where, and respected no where.

I was upon the whole much pleased with Bath, and we purpose paying it another visit in the spring season. — But what gave me the greatest pleasure there was an unexpected meeting, the day before we left it, with Lady Betty Bramblebear, between whom and her husband, there appeared the greatest harmony. Though Mr. Vernon's report of his friend's residence and pursuits in London had had some weight with me, I could not help attributing the part he had taken to the partiality of friendship. — It was no

dependence on his report that had determined me to struggle with my feelings, but the first of all motives, to act right, and to consider the feelings of my father and of my cousins.

Our stay at Bath was necessarily limited to a short time. Christmas is the chief festive season in England, and the usual time of the year for the more public manifestation of charity to the poor, as well as of hospitality and gaiety among the rich. It is in fact the Carnival of England. The time is generally spent by those who have landed property on their estates, and at the neighbouring chief towns, where their presence produces spirit and a bustle that is very advantageous to the country. To encourage this laudable habit the government has for some years past fixed the assembling of the parliament at the distance of some weeks after Christmas, as the meeting draws all the rich and fashionable families to town.

Before our excursion to Bath, we were engaged in those neighbourly festivities, and a large party had been invited to a

ball at Manor-House, on Christmas-eve. We were therefore obliged to be back in time, but we got home only the day before. The weather was very cold, but my dear affectionate Caroline took care to prevent my suffering much from it, by wrapping me up in furs. You will imagine that my feelings on my journey back were very different from those I had when we left Manor-House. I was not only well in person; my mind had received a conviction that restored it to its former ease, and the effect was a flow of spirits, which was not decreased by a circumstance that took place next morning — a circumstance you will perhaps think extraordinary, but with which I am sure you will be pleased. I must tell it you as it happened, for it was attended with an emotion, for which I was angry with myself, and of which you must give me your opinion.

I was sitting in my cousin's room, playing on the sofa with my beautiful little Caroline, when Mr. Vernon came in. — He told me he had rode over from Mount-Vernon, to bring me a letter

himself. I naturally imagined it was from Lady Mount-Vernon, and asked if it was not. — He suddenly said, and I thought with a particular look;

"From Darrell."

The abrupt mention of the name, in connection with a letter to me, certainly created a very unaccountable feeling — my blood seemed to forsake my heart, and rushed with violence into my face. Fortunately I was still fondling Caroline, which gave me an opportunity of hiding my face on her neck, till the colour was gone. I would not have had Mr. Vernon perceive it for the world; and I afterwards saw by his manner that he had not, which also convinced me that he had no meaning in what I thought a particular look, when he mentioned the name of Darrell. Did I not know my heart; had I not thoroughly examined it, my dear Angelica, I would, without hesitation own to you, that there was something suspicious in this violent blushing, and I would immediately have recourse to some penance to chastise the secret inclination of my heart. But such

an inclination could not be secret to myself, Angelica — I could not love and not know it — no, it is not love — I never think, I never could think, of being united with Sir Francis Darrell; — and with this proof of the freedom of my heart, I would not banish from it my better feelings, nor would my dear sister advise it. She will rejoice, as I do, at the hope raised by the note, for it cannot be called a letter, with which Sir Francis has honoured me. You will find a copy of it, with my answer, at the end of this letter.

And now, my dearest Angelica, let me ask you, if any thing can be more delightful than the contemplation of a being, good by nature, but perverted by evil communication and habit, exploring truth, and finding the paths of everlasting life and happiness? I know you will feel it as I do — as my father, as my cousins do — they were as much delighted with my note, as I was myself. It gave occasion to a conversation some days after I received it, in which the Bishop of —— took a part. He is a

friend of George's, who loves and admires him. George spoke of Sir Francis, and in confidence mentioned the circumstance. He was greatly pleased, and said that much might be hoped from such a disposition, with such an understanding. My father related the restoration of Grove Park; and at the Bishop's request, I gave a short account of his preserving me in France.

"Providence will interpose its influence in his favour," said he; "depend upon it, he will finish by becoming a complete Christian."

The word *complete*, Angelica, conveyed more to my mind than the speaker intended, and I put up a secret prayer in my heart that it might be *complete* — complete to salvation. But I must not omit the good man's observations which followed, — they are so admirable, and were so impressive, that I wrote them when he left us, and I think I can give them to you word for word.

"If a man good by nature," continued he, "sits down to examine the Gospel, is there the least shadow of rea-

son why he should reject it? He finds in it a religion, pure, holy, and benevolent, as the God that gave it. He finds not only its moral precepts, but even its sublimest mysteries calculated to promote internal sanctity, vital piety, unbounded philanthropy. He finds it throughout so great and noble, so congenial to the finest feelings and most generous sentiments of his soul, that he cannot but *wish* it may be true; and never yet, I believe, did any good man wish it to be true, but he actually found it so. He sees in it every expectation of nature answered, every infirmity supported, every want supplied, every terror dissipated, every hope confirmed; nay, he sees that God has done abundantly above all that he could either ask or think; that he has given him *eternal happiness in a life to come.* Will this man love darkness rather than light? Will he choose to pursue even virtue with much pains, little success, and no other wages but death? or will he be led to her through a safe and easy path by an

infallible guide, who does not desire him to serve God for nought?"

How admirable and how just are these remarks! They are such as our dear Abate Cevello himself would have uttered — I could not but look at this admirable man with veneration and affection. I wished *my catechumen*, as he calls himself, had heard him, and I think my recollection in writing what he spoke was assisted by an idea of sending it to him, if ever he should write me another note. He has not, nor do I now expect one as we are come to town. My father and George talk of calling upon him, as well on the final settlement of the papers relative to Grove Park, as by way of paying him a visit; and Mr. Vernon declares he will force him into company. — I doubt his success.

* * * * * * * * *

I have been out with Caroline, returning some calls. — What beautiful streets! what animated countenances every where! what rattling of coaches! what thunder-

ing of knockers! — But I must conclude my country life before I begin my town one.

I made an *en passant* mention of Lord Mariton to you, which you will think too slight, considering the importance of the subject. I told you he was an acquaintance of the Vernons, though I might have said of George's; but I met him first at Mount-Vernon. He is a man that says what he hears others say, and repeats newspapers: — I have shown you how disagreeable he can make himself, and the offer he made me did not render him more agreeable in my eyes. The very day after the unpleasant hour I spent, where I expected a delightful one, he came to Manor-House, and begged Caroline to give him an opportunity of speaking to me alone. — I meant to have avoided him that morning, but, thus called for, I made no hesitation in receiving him. I was conscious of some little prejudiced feelings before he made his appearance, but recollected that the occasion demanded civility; and I declined his proposal with great politeness, the misfortune of

which was, that he thought himself encouraged to repeat it, which he did on the evening of the ball, at Manor-House, when I felt it necessary to mark my resolution more pointedly. I avoided him, and contrived not to dance with him. He was convinced; I have seen nothing of him since — and I believe his proposal is known only to our own family.

So much for my first and only lover in England; though I think I am mistaken: — I believe I have another, as to my soul at least.

Among George's acquaintance at Woodlee, there is a good kind of a good-looking, soft-faced, red-haired, half-witted young man, whom he thinks well of, and whom Caroline and I pity for mistaken zeal, and foolish well-meaning. I wish our pity may not some day see occasion to give way to a less agreeable passion; but I begin to suspect that his zeal has more of earth than heaven in it, and that his folly is less connected with well-meaning than with evil-doing. I will not go into his history or character at present; I only mention him as

my lover, or intending-to-be lover. He began his courtship at Bath, and how think you? By assuring me that I was in danger of losing my way, for, from what he had heard, I was in the wrong path, one, that if I would allow him, he would prove to me did lead to—that is, did not lead to — heaven.

His first thought was to place me among the damned, but excluding me from the state of the blessed, he recollected, was a politer way of expressing the same thing. As I thought him sincere, and I really do not know even now but that he is, I determined not to take offence, but to hear what he would say: we happened to be sitting together on a bench in one of the rooms, while George and Caroline were talking with some of their acquaintance at a little distance.

"Mr. Palmer," said I, "you would alarm me, if I had not taken some pains to convince myself that I was in the right road."

"You are as wide of it," said he, "as Mecca from Jerusalem. I protest

it is a pity that so sweet a young lady, for you are a very sweet young lady, should not be led where the true light shineth, and by the illumination of which she might perceive the tinsel and mock jewels, the paste diamonds, and wax pearls, which from dark corners dazzle the eyes of her otherwise excellent understanding."

"What dark corners do you mean, Mr. Palmer," said I.

"Those," said he, "of a certain Beldam mentioned in the Revelations."

"I am still at a loss," replied I.

"Very likely," said he; "for they keep these things from your knowledge."

"Who keep?" cried I — "and what things?"

He gazed in a very odd way at me, as if he meant more than he could speak; then said;

"Truly it is a difficult thing for a young man like me, and not having those privileges a happy state might afford him, to expound with delicate propriety to a delicate young lady those

— matters — but if — it were my happy lot" —

I looked at him as if I anticipated a proposal; but that idea, which I am sure was in his mind, received such a check by my look, that he was puzzled how to make a conclusion to the happy lot, which, however, he turned off with more address than I thought him master of. — "If," stammered he, "it were my happy lot to — to — to — I beg your pardon, I was going to say — rival the Pope: — but that is not my meaning — rivalry is out of the question. — I mean if it were my happy lot to render you spiritual service, I should think myself the most fortunate of men."

I should have shown some displeasure, but that *Pity* still held its power over me, and I only said, with a smile, "that I begged he would not trouble himself to think of my spiritual state." He seemed pleased at getting off so well; and far from being repressed, he paid me the more attention from what had passed between us.

When I repeated this little religious

lesson to Caroline, and the tendency which I thought it had of an offer of her neighbour's heart, she laughed, and said she began to fear that all was not gold that glittered, nor all zeal religion, and told me that he had also been talking some nonsense to her, from which he had extricated himself the same way.

We determined, however, not to be hasty in our judgment, and though at times we have not known what to make of his looks, he has never ventured upon similar talk.

The truth of what our dear Abate used to say to us, on the separation from the church, is wonderfully exemplified in this country. When once a schism is made, there is no saying into how many other schisms it will break. England is full of sectaries: but I shall take another opportunity of expressing my sentiments to you on the state of religion here, when I have seen more, and can judge better. I shall at present say no more on the subject than that I find my dear Caroline's sentiments, though differing from mine in some respects, yet often

agreeing, and certainly pleasing by their pureness and sincerity: and there is one delightful thought accompanies all our serious conversations — she has never shown the least desire to sway my opinions, or to draw me from the church. On my part I have not been equally passive; I have shown a desire to have her one of us, though I have been cautious of persisting, for it would ill become so feeble an intellect as mine to dictate, or be dogmatic.

I remove from the country but slowly, my dear Angelica, and I have a good deal to do there yet, before I can feel myself established in Hanover-Square: — I will try to be more expeditious. I will not give you a particular account of our country balls, till I see something of those in town. At that given by my cousins, I found Mr. Palmer again, a little sweetly assiduous, and hinting spiritual solicitude, but I laughed, and made use of him in my dancing engagements to prevent my being annoyed by Lord Mariton.

Mrs. Dartford was with us: — we

talked of you and of Clementina Belvoce. She has written very strongly to her son to return immediately, without forming any contract before he sees her. As he was going to Naples, I am of opinion, that being out of sight of the object by whom his vanity was flattered — for after all, that is the secret of his fickleness — he will not find it difficult to comply with her desire. She sends her kind regards to you, and says that if you will catch him, and chain him, and keep him at your side, and bring him to England, her gratitude would be boundless. I wish Angelica, we could fall upon some means of curing this youth of his folly, for her sake. By all accounts he would be an estimable character if he could be corrected of it. If you cannot turn your thought to the glory of fixing him for life, try I beseech you to do it long enough to bring him to England. I think it very probable that he will hasten from Naples to Florence: — if so, I have promised Mrs. Dartford that you shall do all in your power to take care of him for her.

And now, adieu to Herefordshire for the present; nor will I stop at Oxford longer than to change horses, though, the fact is, we stopped there two days, my cousins having friends at Christchurch, with whom they had engaged to spend a day on their way to London.

The celebrity of Oxford as a University you are well acquainted with. It has given many great and learned men to the world. We are to spend some time in that part of the country, when the weather is more favourable for moving out of doors. The cold for some weeks has been intense, and, while we were at Oxford, there was a fall of snow. I am told that the winter is more than usually severe: — you have no idea of it in dear Italy. But in spite of its sharp attack, you would not dislike it: — it is friendly to health, and gives colour to the complexion; — they say mine is improved already. But the horses are changed, — let us run into the coach, and with our pelisses and muffs, and furred feet-baskets keep ourselves warm all the way: — we are now

at the door in Hanover-Square—get out and run to the fire, with a good appetite for dinner at six o'clock.

Having brought you to London, I shall conclude this letter. If I receive one from you this week, I will acknowledge it under the same cover; if not, this shall travel alone, and reproach you for your tardiness in writing. My love to the Marchese, and Marchesa, and Signora Bentivole. You know, my dearest Angelica, how you are loved by

Your affectionate

Augusta.

LETTER XLIV.

Mr. Saville to the Marchese di Pisani.

London, Feb.

MY DEAR PISANI,

YOUR letter gave me great pleasure: I received it while spending the Christmas in the country at my nephew George Godfrey's, but I thought it better to delay writing again till we came to town. Your participation of my happiness in the affection of my nephew and niece, and the gratification you express at my account of our reception at Grove Park by Sir Francis Darrell, and of the time we spent in Northamptonshire, was a renewal to me of the delight I experienced in those events, and which I felt as I wrote to you.

I had indeed anticipated your feelings, for I knew your friendship—I knew

what impression it would make on you, the Marchesa, Angelica, and your sister; and imagination gave actual enjoyment of future pleasure since realized and returned by your letter. How friendship animates existence! multiplies joys! assures us of our soul! It is the vital principle of happiness; — all other sources produce accidental streams which may be cut off, or cease to flow without destroying happiness: — ambition, wealth, pursuits and desires of every kind may change or be dropped altogether, and man may still be happy if friendship continues its course; even that peculiar love, in its nature so much more ardent, must at last fail or resolve itself into friendship of an exquisite kind. It is the great source of all other enjoyments, for what poor joy must that be which cannot be imparted, which has no echoing hearts to reverberate the emotion: — it is a solitary shriek in a wilderness, it agitates the air and dies away unheard.

I speak of men — for he must be more than man, who in this world can

be happy alone: he must have a full belief of his own immortality; his imagination must already enter him into the communion of higher beings: — to such a man, if ever there was such, earth is at an end, and heaven begun: — but he, who talks of lonely bliss without that supernatural impression, deceives himself. If he contemplates the scenes of nature as effects of chance, of any cause but those appointed by a God to whom he is known, and by whom he is regarded, his bliss is the wonder of a boy of inexperience, and after a few gazings at the show the excitement fails, the bliss is gone, and if he is as deficient in virtue as in piety, he will be more miserable among hills and cataracts, than at a carnival, to which he will soon resort as to the better lot of a being who merits happiness nowhere.

These reflections, my dear Pisani, have presented themselves to my mind, in consequence of thinking, as I do, of our friendship, and comparing the result with the sentiments and extraordinary conduct of Sir Ffancis Darrell, on the same

subject. I told you how both Godfrey and I had courted his friendship, and how we had resolved not to be guided by the opinions of others respecting him. We have persisted in our determination, but all in vain; he will not have our friendship, he will not give us his; he rails at society, immures himself in his library in town before the usual season, and now talks of going into the country when others come to town. We have been at his house twice: — the first time we were not admitted; he returned this call by merely leaving his card at our door, with a letter, appointing a day for us to meet, and sign the papers relative to Grove Park, which were ready to be executed. We accordingly waited upon him. I found a very marked alteration in his countenance, — it had none of that underlook, those varied contortions of the brows, that satirical smile which I observed in our meetings at Paris. On the other hand, it wanted that cheerfulness, that appearance of a mind content with itself, which it wore on the pleasant day he made us pass at Grove Park. He

smiled, but his smile was that of a kind reception—it was not that proceeding from a heart at ease, and, after he shook hands with us, he smiled no more. He is grown paler than he was.

Though his look bespoke no happiness, his conversation differed from it. He said, he had not been so tranquil or happy in his life, as since he left us at Grove Park; that he was aware that we knew him better than we did then; but that he was by no means in a state of mind to enjoy society, which still appeared to him an heterogeneous and malignant assemblage; that he felt himself extremely honoured by the note Augusta had written; that he was sensible of indelible obligations to her, which were daily increasing, and that with my permission, he would take the liberty of thanking her himself in a letter from Belmont, whither he was going shortly, as circumstances compelled him to postpone his intention of travelling till the summer. We persuaded him, without being too urgent, to join a party at Godfrey's, but in vain; he excused himself,

saying, however, that he would pay his respects to the ladies before he left London.

His mildness and his manners were, if possible, more amiable than on the day at Grove Park; and I incline to ascribe this to his pursuits, which are nothing less than a revision of his understanding, and an investigation of the truths of religion; the study of which he attributes to a wish expressed by Augusta, on his taking leave at Grove Park. The note to which he alluded was but a few lines, merely saying that he had met some success in *the task* she had set him.

Such is the state of a young man in whom nature and fortune seemed to have combined their stores to produce happiness: the first has endowed him with genius and fine feelings, the latter, with immense wealth and accomplishments, mental and personal, rarely matched: — together they have made him extremely amiable; — and all this is spoiled by the want of a guide in childhood, by some miserable boyish imprudence, folly, crime, whatever it may be, his sensibility to the

reproach of which drove him into excesses, and connected him fatally with those profligate worshippers of *Reason*, who acknowledge no other deity. I mean not the scum of those worshippers, who, during the Revolution, erected images of Reason in the churches of France and Italy; but the educated philosophers, who, in the very bosom of truth and religion, pride themselves on an intellect that can falsify fact, and on a heart that can defy God. They were not able to eradicate his virtues; but they eradicated all that might have assisted to restore peace to his mind, without even supplying him with that limited antidote, which removes the pangs of reflection for a short time. It was not *his* wisdom to laugh in the midst of destruction; he joined to rail at his nature, and at the supposed Author of it, but he could not be happy; and thus was a being whom every thing marked out for earthly bliss thrown into an abyss of doubt, despair, and misery.

And now, my dear Pisani, I will proceed to the chief object of this letter, and

then I have a request to make which I hope will not be displeasing to you.

You remember that the natural desire I sometimes expressed to see my relations, and my country, and the urgent invitations of my nephew did not rapidly induce a resolution to leave Italy till aided by the Count Olivastro's violent pretensions to Augusta. I little imagined then that a much more serious anxiety respecting her would produce in me a wish to leave England before I had been in it six months. I am going to open my mind to you, Pisani, but the confidence is of a very delicate nature, and which I should probably not resort to just now, but for its connection with the favour I have to beg. You may judge when I tell you that I have not disclosed my feelings, even to George Godfrey. I have hardly dared to trust myself with the knowledge of them. It is, however, in vain for me to deceive myself. I have traced a dangerous partiality in the heart of my child, of the nature of which she is not aware, and it increases daily. Neither Godfrey nor Caroline has no-

ticed it to me, and perhaps they have no suspicion of it, as they think so highly of the understanding of their cousin, that they can have no idea of any danger from susceptibility. This too was my opinion, but it is changed. Darrell occupies her mind. She ascribes all her feelings to gratitude, and to a wish that he should be convinced of the truths of religion.

Of these feelings she makes no secret; she expressed them to himself at Grove Park, since which she has not seen him; but I perceive that the thought of him influences her conduct to others. She will hear no one speak ill of him without defending him; she, in one instance, felt so much that her health was affected, on which account we made an excursion to Bath; she will not listen to George or Caroline on the subject of a lover, though they know more than one who, on the least encouragement, would declare themselves. In short, my dear Pisani, it strikes me, that she is cherishing feelings which may have a fatal influence upon the happiness of her life, and something must be done to counteract their

effect. I am loth to raise the idea in Godfrey's mind, and I mean to continue my own observations a little longer; and if, in the gay circles of London, I find her continue reserved to all the young men introduced to her, I will open my mind to George, and consult with him.

With respect to Darrell himself—he admires her certainly, and respects her, but that is all; he avoids her, as he does the rest of us, though not more pointedly; and it is very evident, that she has not made an equal impression upon his heart. If she had, I confess to you that, so far from seeing an objection, I should be ready to promote a union, which would completely restore him to society and to happiness, and would settle my dear Augusta most desirably in my view, and as I have said, I believe according to the feelings of her own heart. But I have no expectation of it, and I must take the other course; that is, to take care that my child's hopes of happiness in this life may not be blasted.

When I tell you, my dear friend, that it is on this account that I am going to

make my request to you, I trust you will not find the granting of it too difficult an exertion. As the spring advances, I shall turn my thoughts to Grove Park; now, George and Caroline cannot always be with me there. You already understand me, Pisani. You know how our girls love each other. You know they were brought up as sisters. I shall be obliged to stay in England, at least all this year. Augusta is my comfort,—is my life. Can you come to us this spring? If you cannot, will you send Angelica to Augusta? I will myself bring them both to Signa next year, when we will settle our future plans. There is a family of the name of Dorrington, now passing the winter at Naples, who are coming to England in April next, perhaps sooner; they are friends of Godfrey's, who says, they would be happy to take care of Angelica, and he will write to them on the subject. This difficulty being cleared, I hope there will be no other in the way. Tell my dear Angelica in confidence, that it is to her care I wish to trust the heart of her own beloved sister and friend.

We have been in London a little more than a week. It is quite new to me. I have not time just now to give you any account of it, or to tell you how I feel in it. The parliament is met. I have been several times down to the house of commons with George; I could not but think of former times, when Pitt and Fox, Burke, Sheridan, and Windham, drew the attention of the house, I might say of the kingdom, — of the world. I remember that when we lost those brilliant stars the nation felt a kind of vacuum. Admiration had been wound up for years to its highest pitch — no wonder it should fall for a time. At present the house has recovered its brilliancy; it possesses first-rate talents, and, I believe, first-rate virtues. I have great pleasure in attending the debates. I will say more of the speakers in both houses, when I have more leisure. I must also defer other subjects, though I know them to be interesting to you.

Before I conclude, I must tell you that I have received another letter from Count Olivastro; who, in spite of a very

positive answer to his last, continues to solicit my interference. He is coming to England. From his letter I should not be surprised at seeing him in the course of this month. It is absolutely madness, and makes me very uneasy. He talks of appointments, and I know not what. For heaven's sake, keep him at Florence, if you can and he should be still there when you receive this. Augusta has a letter for Angelica ready. Adieu, my dear Pisani; give our most affectionate remembrances to the Marchesa and your sister, and believe me ever

Your sincere friend

GILBERT SAVILLE.

LETTER XLV.

Angelica to Augusta.

Signa

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA,

Your dear interesting letters, dated both at Manor-House, arrived, I know not by what chance, together. — And it is fortunate for me that they did, as several things in the first would have left me in painful suspense, which the other prevented. Your cousins are delightful beings: — I envy and love them — tell them so for me; — say I feel the affection they bestow on you as bestowed on myself, and that I hope some day, not very distant, to embrace them and tell them so myself. — Kiss your little Caroline for me again and again, and do this every morning, and call it Angelica's kiss, that it may be impressed on her mind as well as on her lips.

With what pleasure have I again been reading your letters! I will not connect the idea of any pain with them, though the character of that paradoxical creature, so good and so bad, making his dependents so happy and himself so miserable, avoiding the world because he thinks them malignant, and the Manor-House circle because he finds them benignant, so agreeable to company, so disagreeable to himself, does unavoidably create some, and to say the truth, my dear Augusta, not a little. From all you have said of him, I believe him incapable of a bad action; and the impression left upon me by his conduct in France is confirmed and improved by the light in which your letters place him. It is not the suspicious appearances at Malvern Wells, that are the grounds of the pain he creates.—I think you are in too much haste to take as proof what may be accident: I agree with that amiable woman, Lady Mount-Vernon, that he is slandered; and I am sure that he has ten thousand times more virtue than his slanderers. What gives pain, though this may be called paradoxical on my side, is

his making himself agreeable, and manifesting the most virtuous and engaging dispositions without supporting his pretensions to the character they merit, without confronting detraction and brushing off from him the dirt with which it has spattered him. — And whatever has been really wrong should be repented and absolved: — nothing base could have ever proceeded from such a man; and what fault would not be eclipsed by such virtues?

You see, Augusta, I am almost, if not altogether, as great an enthusiast in the cause of Sir Francis Darrell, as you are, and judging of you by myself, and by my knowledge of you, I think, with all your enthusiasm, there is no danger of your becoming a love-sick maiden, though I own I am very much surprised at not meeting, in any page of these letters, a single lover. Where are the eyes, and the ears, and the hearts, of all your countrymen? Can what we have heard of them be true, that love in England is the offspring of calculation, and that arithmetic is the primer of courtship? Or have you

lost your beauty and sense, and become reserved and repulsive? Why does not this preserver of yours, this Sir Francis Darrell, rouse himself, and by proving that he has a heart worthy of you, tempt you, not to be a love-sick damsel, but to trust your happiness in his hands? Though I know you are no falling-in-love Miss, I am not so certain as you seem to be, that he is all esteem and respect, without a grain of love. Pardon me, my dearest sister, for talking thus; I would not for my life sport with your feelings:— I seriously begin to think, by meditating on the letters before me, that I was mistaken in concluding formerly, that Sir Francis was not likely to be a visitor at Grove Park. I am of opinion, in spite of his reserve and seclusion, that his present conduct indicates more than *you* suspect. *I* suspect that you have made a very strong impression on his heart, and that a consciousness of being unworthy of you has raised in him the ambition of meriting a heart, which he must have seen is not to be gained without peculiar merit.

I would fain think well of this man,

and encourage this thought.—Think what a double victory it would be, if the result of his study should be the recovery of his soul, and the conquest of his heart! Without the former, I am sure you never will value the latter;—but, if he is in earnest, he will find the one as he loses the other. With a candid and sincere desire to know God, no man will fail: If he proceed so far, he will find the rest easy: then let him come and reason with our dear Abate Cevello, who will convince him of the truths of our religion, and completely render him worthy of my dear Augusta.

Am I not suffering my first feelings to run away with my reason and my recollection? Augusta will forgive me:—let my thoughts run how they will, she knows their source, and that my love can correct without concealing them.—Yes, they are hasty thoughts—I must correct them. His appearance in the bower at Grove Park, his mysterious cup, his agitation, his abrupt flight, betoken madness, or unexpiated guilt.—No, no; my dear Augusta must not think

of him; — yet she may rejoice, as I shall, if the exertions of this unhappy man should be attended with conviction and comfort; and none that sincerely seek it by expiation will be denied it. My heart tells me that, however justly I have written this last sentence, it was dictated by a degree of harshness: — the truth is, I am inclined to love the man for what he has done, and what I know of him; but the something behind the veil produces an occasional shudder.

The generous manner of his putting my dear Mr. Saville in possession of Grove Park is beyond all praise, and, with the event in France, renders it but natural, nay a duty, that you should be anxious for his welfare, both here and hereafter. The account of your arrival and of your reception brought tears into my eyes: — your father's feelings, your own, the sympathy of your cousins, Sir Francis's whole conduct, would find their way to a heart much less attached to you than Angelica's. All, all at Grove Park and the country in which it is, is charming, with one exception: — the bower, the

urn, the secret box in the pedestal, — all this I could wish obliterated from the picture. A bower and an urn are not displeasing objects, but of the uses of them you should have been kept completely ignorant. I do not think, my dear Augusta, that you or Mr. Saville, circumstanced as you were, could have done otherwise than you did; but it would have been better, could it have been avoided, for these emblems and memorials of crime or mystery will occasionally disturb your fancy. Had the communication been premeditated I should have reprobated the conduct of Sir Francis; — but of any such intention he was completely innocent, and his actions, when accident led you to the spot, were the effects of passion amounting to madness. The secret that preys upon his mind is evidently of a dreadful nature; and I wish to Heaven it was in your power to banish from yours all the circumstances which have unfortunately come to your knowledge.

Before I quit this subject I will make

one observation respecting the state of Sir Francis Darrell's irreligious opinions:— he must have entered upon the study of religion, with a *wish* not to find it true:— immortality must be a terror to bad men, and he, who has no interest in finding that he has a soul, will be ready to receive arguments why there should be no God. It is sad to think how successful the wish was — it is clear he has not been the less miserable for it. Now, my dear Augusta, if he has renewed his religious study, with a *wish* to find religion true, we may confidently hope that the reverse of this will follow: the repentance that secures pardon will remove terror from immortality; the divinity will be rendered manifest by redemption; and in looking to a glorious existence in another life he will be happy in this. I fervently pray that he may be successful; and if he is *sincere* he will be, for *sincerity* is the essence of all religion.

Let us now turn to a different subject — to a man not unacquainted with religion, but unacquainted with himself — your amiable Mrs. Dartford's son. You judged

rightly in supposing me apprised sooner than you of my swain's desertion, and of Clementina Belvoce's triumph; but what will you say when I tell you that she is *unseraphised*, and that her votary is kneeling at the shrine of a certain French beauty, Mademoiselle Cornelie le Grand, one of the best dancers and tallest women of her country? There is a report that he is actually married to her. I hope it is not true for Mrs. Dartford's sake, and you must keep this from her at present. I hope so too for his own sake, for he certainly is amiable, and has virtues which in time would conquer his vanity and fickleness. She is the daughter of the French resident at Naples; and the enchantment it seems springs from her toe. Oh! what a source of love! I know he admires good dancing, and is a fine dancer himself—so together they have kicked poor Clementina out of her seraphic promotion.

I know nothing of the present angel:—she is remarkably tall, but well proportioned, inclining to *embonpoint;* her countenance is singular, and very unlike the

tournure of the French; her complexion may be rather called white than fair; and, her cheeks being regularly supplied with toilet bloom, her face is compared to an alabaster doll; her eye-brows are light, yet her eye is of a sparkling black like jet; to finish the picture her hair surrounds her face in flaxen curls. Do not suppose Augusta that I am humourously collecting traits from my own imagination, or that I believe the picture to be very like the original. I give you the copy from a prejudiced painter: — it is the description sent to my mother by Signora Belvoce; — you may therefore suspect it put together for the occasion.

From what you have said of Mrs. Dartford, and indeed from what I myself know of her son, I really take an interest in his fate; and it would give me great pleasure to send him back unmarried to his mother; of whom you give so pleasing an idea, that I should be happy to know her, and who knows how soon I may pay her a visit at the Priory, though not as a daughter. Present my respects to her. I am quite pleased with Mr.

Vernon's courting by proxy for her, and I smiled at his own gallant compliment.

How well you have grouped the Mount-Vernon family! But I am frightened when I look at Lady Barbara, and her horse in the air, over a gate, till I see her explaining the mystery of it by the same means as the church-going of Mrs. Godfrey, your mass-going, Mr. Vernon's jesting, and Mr. Dartford's "offering himself to every pretty girl he meets, — *all habit*, my dear." Mr. Vernon must be an agreeable man. — I do not dislike his brother; but Lady Mount-Vernon is indeed a character to study, and to emulate, and I think the Marchioness of N** entitled to the highest respect and admiration. Lady Mount-Vernon is a paragon: — her virtue and good sense have in a great degree assimilated her husband's character with her own. If she had shown disgust at the sports to which he is devoted, he would have sunk into the mere huntsman, and she would have been lost among the dregs of fashion: — the virtue she displays he sees, and seeing must love, and loving must share, and so

becomes *congenial* in essentials with her —so that your principle is still without exception,—"congeniality is necessary to a happy marriage." Her manner of thinking respecting Sir Francis Darrell charms me, and I have adopted it. Her thoughts of Lady Betty Bramblebear are charitable, and do her honour.—I would not be in haste to credit the reports you have heard. You have made me love Lady Mount-Vernon, and I could dwell upon her character much longer, but I must think of drawing my letter to a conclusion.

I wish, my dear Augusta, that I could repay the interest of your letters by sending you equally interesting accounts from the banks of the Arno—but there is little novelty in Florence, and my domestic life flows on just as when you were here, except that I want my dear sister, whose place I have found no Caroline to supply.

Olivastro is here:—we have seen him but seldom:—he is now going again to Vienna. I wish he would recover himself for his family's sake: the violence of his dispo-

sition is turned into a gloomy sullenness. What folly, what madness, is it for any man to persevere in a passion which he is convinced is not reciprocal! And as to the hope of overcoming a resolution decidedly taken, it is not only an insult, but barbarity.— I would not see him if he comes to England, if I were you.

I have reserved a piece of intelligence to give a relish to the conclusion of my letter. My father has gained his law-suit at last; and, although it has cost him a great deal, the difference to his fortune is greater even than we supposed before you left Signa. This has put him into spirits, and he talks of visiting Grove-Park with delight, when all his affairs are arranged; — but it is long to look forward to another year at the beginning of a new one. I wish our bodies could be as expeditious as our souls — how I would embrace you and your dear Caroline in the twinkling of an eye! But, as it is, we must as you say, manage to twirl the one after the other over the surface of the earth between Grove-Park and Signa: exercise and change of air

are the best prescriptions for health, and what is an Alp or two in the way!

I long for your next letter; to hear more of your progress in English society, and to be again in thought with you, your cousins, and the friends whom you love. — I want to hear more of Sir Francis Darrell, of Lady Mount-Vernon, Mrs. Dartford: — make me known to them, and keep me up in their minds. Should Sir Francis adhere to his resolution of travelling, and come to Florence, I will do every thing in my power to show him how much I feel myself indebted to him in the person of my dear Augusta, and I would all but tell him that I love him, in spite of his making himself hateful.

I have just seen a gentleman attached to the British embassy at Florence, who is returned from Naples. — By him I find that Mr. Dartford is not married to Mademoiselle Cornelie, but that there is a talk of a marriage, which he did not deny. Nor is the lady what Signora Belvoce describes her. She is not so white; her hair is not flaxen; her eye-brows not light; and her eyes not black;

but she is very, very tall, and well made for dancing. The disappointed Signora of Rome has been indulging a humourous vein, that's all.

A thousand loves from the Marchese, my mother, and my aunt. May heaven shower blessings on my dear, dear Augusta, prays her

Most affectionate sister,

ANGELICA.

LETTER XLVI.

Augusta to Angelica.

Hanover Square, Feb.

MY DEAR ANGELICA,

You shall again receive two letters together, but this must be a short one, and shall go under the same cover with that which I wrote last week. You will perceive by this, that the letter I was expecting from you is arrived. It has in most respects given me very great pleasure, but certainly much pain on the subject of the two young men whose characters are so strikingly and painfully opposite. The one immoveably fixed to an unattainable object, the other perpetually changing his object, attainable or not; Olivastro becoming morose from disappointment; Mr. Dartford, more airy, gay, and volatile at every change. I hope

that something has happened to prevent the foolish step the latter was about to take, and the suspense on account of Mrs. Dartford will make me look the more anxiously for your next letter. Were it not for her, I should not be able to treat the subject seriously; and, even as it is, I cannot help laughing at the humourous spite of Clementina's mother. I trust that Mademoiselle Cornelie is now dancing to the same tune she made Signora Belvoce sing; and glad should I be to hear that our *Amante inconstante* was safe back at Florence, and under your care. If he is so fortunate as to escape this time, tie him, or cage him, I again beseech you, in Mrs. Dartford's name, till you have a good opportunity of sending him home, unless my dear Marchese will be prevailed upon either to come to England in the spring or send you to us, as I find my father has written to request, and then I commission you to bring him; in which case you may either prepare yourself with the Marchese's and Marchesa's consent to

make him their son, or neglect that caution, as seems best to you.

To be serious, my dear Angelica — let me congratulate you and my dear friends at Signa on the successful issue of their contest for the property of the Marchesa's uncle, and let me hope that the business which is likely to engage your father and mother for some time will induce them to comply with my father's request and my anxious desire, to let you come to me with the family whom he has mentioned to the Marchese. Before he wrote we thought of the difficulty which would arise from want of a proper opportunity, and my cousin George fortunately knew that Mr. and Mrs. Dorrington were to return early this year. I know my dear kind friends will comply: I feel as if I should have my Angelica in my arms before the month of May. It shall from this time be one of my pleasures to anticipate our meeting, and all the dear and agreeable consequences of it.

I will briefly notice the points of your

letter before I attend to other circumstances which interest me more, I fear you will think, than they should. You are certainly right in your opinion that Sir Francis Darrell should confront detraction, and that whatever he has done wrong should be repented and absolved, for he could never have done a base action, and he has virtues that should place him high, very high, among men. But you are as certainly wrong, Angelica, when you surmise that he considers me in any way but with esteem and respect. It is clear that I have made no other impression on his mind; and, though I may have given the first impulse to his reflection, it is his own understanding and the importance of the stake that actuate his perseverance. No, my love, he will never offer himself to me, and you do me justice, Angelica, in believing that I never will unite myself to a body without a soul. The events of that morning were accidental: neither he nor I was to blame, but I will consult with my father about removing the

monument, if it can be done without hurting the feelings of Sir Francis.

You say I must not think of him: — indeed I do not at all, as *you mean* — I do much in *other respects*. He is *not* mad, Angelica — I hope he is not criminal. — I see he is unhappy; — let us not be severe, my sister. — He does, he does *wish* to find religion true, and you are right, as you always are, in saying that he will find it so. I knew you would agree in Lady Mount-Vernon's opinion of him; I knew you would be delighted with that most amiable, that first of female characters; and as for Sir Francis, they may call him what they will, but he is *not hateful.*

Having replied to your letter, my dear Angelica, I will now add a few lines on the progress of my London life. We have been here upwards of a fortnight. Unused to racket, — the bustle, the noise, the perpetual motion of a town life, absolutely make me giddy. I have never experienced any thing like it before. At Paris, the hotels are more retired and quiet,

and besides I was there but a short time, and much of that time was occupied with extraordinary circumstances. With respect to London, I cannot take this opportunity of giving you a particular account of it: I have hardly time to say what I wish respecting myself, and I shall presently be obliged to put down my pen to dress for dinner.

And who, Angelica, do you think is to dine with us? I know you have guessed. I know you will tell me that I should not have put the question for any body else. —You are right, then, in your guess. Sir Francis Darrell is to dine with George to-day. When I wrote the letter which this will accompany I did not know that I should see him all the winter. When my father and George saw him on business, he said he would have the honour of paying his respects to the ladies, and these respects were paid by his leaving a double set of cards at the door. After this, George sent him a pressing invitation, and engaged Mr. Vernon to endeavour to bring him. — He succeeded, and

the invitation was accepted, so that he will be here this evening, between six and seven o'clock, for in London they call their suppers dinners. I shall not close my letter to-night, and shall add the occurrences of the evening. We expect no other company; — I believe Mr. Vernon stipulated with George and Caroline for a strictly family dinner.

Lady Mount-Vernon is in town; I have seen her twice, and with encreasing affection. Never was there a being of more real merit, with less assuming manners. A natural dignity precludes all appearance of diffidence, without marking the slightest confidence or self-will; her sentiment seems reason without the necessity of argument to support it; her conversation is full of pleasantry and light turns of wit, but she listens more than the speaks. Her town-house is in Park-Lane; Lady Barbara Lewis is staying with her; she gives a ball next week, to which we are going. I must lay down my pen — I am writing in a convenient

dressing-room near a good fire, adjoining my bed-room, whither I retire when I would avoid company.

* * * * * * * *

11 o'clock.

A slight head-ach, which was more noticed by Caroline than felt by myself, has served me as a reason for retiring early — but I cannot go to bed till I have unburdened my mind to my dear sister. I have passed an agitated day, Angelica. I am agitated still, but I charge you by our dear friendship, not to mistake my feelings, not to suspect that I can admit into my heart sentiments and an affection for a man in whose heart there is evidently nothing of that nature towards me. — But the agitation is of a pleasing kind. I more and more admire and esteem him, and so will you too, though his success has not been proportionate to the eagerness of our wishes, to the fervency of our prayers. Far, however, from seeing cause to despair, I think I see Providence,

gracious to his sincerity, working gradually on his understanding.

When I laid down my pen to dress, I little suspected what was to befall me. — At the usual time I went to the drawing-room, expecting to find Caroline there, but, to my astonishment, I found only Sir Francis Darrell, who was standing near the fire with a newspaper in his hand. As I opened the door he looked towards me, and recognized me with a bow, but without advancing. The sudden meeting, and his being entirely alone, gave me a slight shock; but the distance and reserved salutation dispelled it even before I reached the fire-place. It is the first time I have seen him since he left me in the bower at Grove Park alone. His countenance wore a very different appearance — it was calm, his brow was smooth, and there was a smile on his lips. — He looked pale. I spoke first, expressing a hope that I saw him well. After the usual words, I asked him if my cousin or my father knew he was come.

"Yes," said he, "we came in toge-

ther just now, and they are only gone up to their dressing-rooms — they will be here presently."

Why did I feel any awkwardness at being alone with him? I certainly did; and, in consequence, I said that I would go and bring Mrs. Godfrey. He bowed, as if he understood my motive, and at first said nothing to detain me — but as I turned to go,

"Let me," said he, "take this opportunity, Miss Saville, of saying what I cannot so well say before others; I shall perhaps not have another —"

I stood motionless, and looked at him in expectation of what he was going to say, the introduction to which was rather extraordinary to my ears.

"Whatever others may think of me," said he, "pray do you believe me when I say, that in the little experience I have had in life of what some call pleasure, others happiness, I have found nothing equal to the sensation which some transient consciousness of a virtue of some kind gives to the heart, and that sensation I owe to you at this moment. Gra-

titude I consider as a virtue as well as an emotion; it is a virtue, for it is not in general agreeable to the malignant nature of our species, and men do not like to feel it, as is apparent by daily experience. It has not, in general, found admission in my own heart, and so far I confess it has been bad, but it shall be so no longer in this respect — I think I may say it is so no longer. I feel my heart full of it to your father and to your cousins, for their tolerating such a spirit as mine, but it is to you that I feel most grateful."

"How to me?" said I.

"Have you not brought me to my senses?" he replied. "Have you not taught me to think that there is such a thing as happiness, to *wish* for it *for ever*, and more than half to *hope* it?"

"Oh! hope it altogether," cried I, "and it will be yours; and, though I cannot take this merit to myself, the reflection will be to me a source of great delight. If gratitude is so sweet, think what pleasure I owe to you."

"But how far does your action surpass mine! I accidentally rescued a

body; you, with anxious premeditation, which does you honour, have perhaps rescued a soul."

"Sir Francis," cried I, with delight, "this charms me."

"Softly," said he; "I said *perhaps*, and I will not have you think me more advanced in *my task* than I am; the *full wish* and *the partial hope* have not sufficiently influenced my understanding, my stubborn understanding, which no prize on earth or in Heaven can tempt or bend. Look at the mass of mankind; have they souls? And if they had, what sort of spirit would it be? Is it such as would deserve happiness even in this life? And if not, how can an eternity of bliss be prepared for it?"

He said this with a mild seriousness of countenance; then, throwing a very pleasing smile into it, he added,

"I am indeed but too much inclined to draw my reasonings from the being I look at, whose every feature and every sentiment bespeak a soul, and whose virtues deserve a heaven."

I felt a colour come into my face;—

he had never before paid me a compliment, and it was so unlike him, that I was greatly surprised.

" Nay," cried I, " do not turn so important an observation into the language of common compliment."

He exclaimed — " Common compliment!"— paused a moment, then said — " True, these are words of course, and should never have been used to Miss Saville — Pardon."

I wished to carry him back to the subject. However feeble my power of reasoning, I was desirous of suggesting my own thoughts, which, if not convincing, might have raised new ideas, and his own strength of understanding might have pursed them with success — but, at the moment he asked my pardon, Caroline came in. I would have continued the conversation before her, and with her assistance, had he not clearly avoided the renewal of it, by going forward to meet her, and afterwards by persevering in general topics. He seemed pleased with the manner in which Caroline received him, and Mr. Vernon soon

after coming in, followed by my father and George, we were immediately summoned to dinner, and sat down a party of six. It was not the less agreeable for being small, and had the premeditated object been a conciliation of mutual regard, nothing could have been better calculated. The pleasing attentions of Caroline, the friendly manner of my father and George, the peculiar turns of the conversation, were all adapted to gain his confidence and regard; and his friend Mr. Vernon was congenially active in promoting the ease and openness of friendship through the day. In the evening we met in the drawing-room — he seemed quite at home — there was not the slightest appearance of constraint — he chatted with ease and on every subject; during the serving of coffee he went of his own accord to the piano, and touched and varied all the chords with an accurate and delicate finger. Caroline requested him to play. He assured her that he could not, and that he had displayed the whole of his accomplishment

in showing that he was not unacquainted with the principles of harmony.

"Alas!" added he, "I have never known how to make use of them."

This pointed allusion brought tears to my eyes, and my heart was so full at the thought, and the manner in which it was expressed, that I would have indulged the flow of them, but for the consciousness that it would have made a scene. I saw that Caroline partook my feeling. I believe we all were struck with the words.

He was still sitting before the piano, when Lord and Lady Mount-Vernon were announced. It is impossible for me to paint to you the sudden, the immediate change that took place in his countenance and deportment. His smile and his ease forsook him; — something like his Paris knitted brow appeared, and he looked as if he meditated an escape from torture — he rather eyed than looked at them as they came forward. Their visit was unexpected, but proved to be a design of Mr. Vernon's, to entrap his friend into a ball. He knew that a card

would be a snare easily avoided, and he knew also that if the invitation was made personally, in Lady Mount-Vernon's manner, the charm would be irresistible. Certain that she did not think ill of Sir Francis, and that she was disposed to give him a relish for society, he had led her and his brother into this little conspiracy against the misanthropy by which his friend was unhappily ruled. He was silent, till Lord Mount-Vernon, addressing him, regretted not seeing him lately in Herefordshire, and hoped that he was not going to desert them altogether. He evidently did not give this speech any credit for cordiality: he barely said,

"Your Lordship's very good."

"I shall judge whether you really think so, Sir Francis," said Lady Mount-Vernon, "if you will give me reason to call you *very good*, by complying with a request I shall take this opportunity of making."

Looking at her with a mild but serious countenance, he said he was afraid that he could never convince her that he had any title to that epithet, yet there

were few whom he more wished to think that he had.

"That is a very agreeable compliment to me, Sir Francis; and I say this perhaps more sincerely than you do, as I am not apt to compliment."

"Believe me, it is no compliment, Madam," said he.

"Then you will comply with my request?"

"If in my power."

"I give a ball this day week"—

"I assure your Ladyship," cried he, interrupting her, and supposing the invitation given,

"And I am sure," cried Mr. Vernon, interrupting him, and supposing the excuse he was about to make, "that you are not engaged."

"My dear Vernon," said he, "you know I am no dancer."

"You need not dance," said Lady Mount-Vernon, "unless you like. I see you would rather not come, as to any pleasure that is to be derived from a ball — comply as a gratification to me, to say nothing of our friends here."

"Lady Mount-Vernon, Mrs. Godfrey, this is really too good, too flattering; — my eyes are opened — I am not to be deceived — it is not to a ball that I am invited — it is to society — what shall I say? It is not easy to alter the disposition; I have some ungracious habits to conquer, and many enemies to meet; — but I must be worse than I am to be insensible of such exertions in favour of an unhappy mind. — I will endeavour to deserve the friendship of this circle."

This unexpected openness affected every one present. There was a short silence, as if no one knew what to say, till that angel of a woman, Lady Mount-Vernon, with a look expressive of the feeling he had raised, said,

"Sir Francis, you have rendered it impossible to speak otherwise than in a serious tone. — I shall be happy to see you at my ball; but it is, as you have rightly judged — the invitation given in this manner is to prove to you that your friends are very anxious to see you filling the station your birth, your fortune, and

your acquirements have marked you for. You will not, I trust, refuse us."

He was overpowered by the emotion caused by this speech — the tears rushed to his eyes — he wiped them away with his handkerchief: —

"This is too much for me," cried he; "I cannot bear it; — this, Vernon, is your doing."

There was now a tear in every eye. My father, George, Mr. Vernon, and his brother, all spoke their feelings. Can feelings be painful and yet sweet? Yes, Angelica, mine were.

Sir Francis had risen, and Mr. Vernon was speaking, when Lady Mount-Vernon, who knows so well how to time and qualify circumstances, whispered me to go to the piano-forte — but perceiving what a task she had given me, and which indeed I should have declined, without noticing my inability to comply, she went herself, and during her execution of a sonata, the conversation was turned. — Towards the conclusion of the piece, she requested her carriage might be ordered. On rising she said, "she could not stay

to hear me sing to-night," and giving no time for the return of painful feelings, she took leave, saying to Sir Francis, as she went away —

"Well, I shall expect you."

When she was gone, we all spoke of her with rapture. As for Mr. Vernon, he declares he is absolutely in love with his sister. Sir Francis regretted that he had not cultivated her friendship more. He staid but a short time after she went — he did not recover the ease he had acquired before her visit — he was thoughtful, and once I heard him in a whisper, ejaculate to himself — "Good God!" In wishing us good night, he said that he should certainly go to Lady Mount-Vernon's ball. Mr. Vernon went away with him — we afterwards, alone, had a short conversation on the day. My father and George resolved to do every thing in their power to give him a relish for society, and to check the malevolence of his enemies, and the equally injurious folly of no-meaning repeaters of malice.

Upon the whole, my dear Angelica, you see that it was not without reason I said, that though I had been agitated, my agitation was of a pleasing kind. The man to whom I am so much indebted, has thrown himself into the hands of Providence; he is entering society with better feelings; and, — Oh! with what pleasure do I say it! — he seems, in spite of whatever may have passed, to merit the esteem and happiness now breaking like a new day upon him.

It is late, and I will go to bed — in the morning I will write, *good-morrow*, and seal my packet to be dispatched with my father's letter to the Marchese.

* * * * * * *

I have woke to horror, Angelica — the celestial vision is vanished — It was all a dream. — I dreamt he was an angel, I wake to find him a —— Oh! Heaven restrain my pen! restrain my thoughts! I know not what to write, or what to think — read the enclosed, which I have had

strength enough to copy; read, my dear sister, and you will see that truth and falsehood, beauty and deformity, virtue and vice, are undistinguishable. Oh! that you were here! — I have not yet seen Caroline this morning — I am but just risen — I found the horrid note upon my table as I drew it to the fire which Madelena had been lighting — she it was who put it there — she received it this morning at the door, from a boy, who asked to speak particularly with my maid. She never saw him before, and knows nothing of him. — What shall I think? Can it be malice? Is he all deceit? All art? One part of the note bears too evident a mark of something wrong. He has spoken with levity of the effect of my gratitude. Gracious Heaven! Did I kiss his hand, without washing away the kiss with tears? Oh! Angelica, my dear Angelica, my horror is unsupportable — Has he dared to speak lightly of me? It cannot be — he cannot be such a hypocrite — No, I am led by excessive pain to wrong him. I must send for Caroline

— but I will first put up my letter, for it must go to-day. For Heaven's sake, come to me Angelica. — Come to

Your unhappy, affectionate

AUGUSTA.

A NOTE,

Addressed to Miss Saville.

BEWARE, young lady—unperceived danger is the worst danger—you neither know yourself, nor your bretrayer. Your romantic preservation has already cost you your heart; take care, or it will cost you more. Your *preserver* is born to be your destroyer—he is the most artful of men. He knows, and he says, that the kiss you gave his hand, came from your heart. The world are talking of it. He is well aware that you can only be won under the disguise of virtue and religion. Do not trust your ears; he has not an atom of either—he has at this very time an engagement of the heart. His design with respect to you is not yet ripe—Make

a proper use of this friendly communication, and then will the writer of it be entitled to the name of

Your

PRESERVER.

LETTER XLVII.

Augusta to Angelica.

Hanover Square, Feb.

I WISH, my dearest Angelica, that I had not been in such haste to dispatch my last letter: — my father had desired to have it at breakfast to forward with his; and, with the feelings I had on that morning, I did not foresee any circumstance that was likely to induce me to delay it. But I am notwithstanding angry with myself, for you will probably think I expressed the shock caused by the anonymous note in terms too strong; and you will condemn me for being so easily agitated, and so ready to credit the malicious communication of a conçealed informant. At the same time, my dear sister, you will allow that the thoughts raised by that note were sufficient to agi-

tate me, independent of all consideration respecting any engagement Sir Francis Darrell might have — his engagements concern not me, farther than as I take a sincere interest in the happy progress of his mind to all that is good. Even in that respect, I confess that the note shocked me extremely, but the idea that he could possibly be practising upon my heart — to be told that I had already lost it — to be warned against him as the most artful of villains — Oh! my dear Angelica! was not all this enough to raise feelings of the most painful kind, in the breast of your sister? If then I have expressed myself with unusual violence, you will not, I am sure, draw conclusions unfavourable to the state of your Augusta's heart; — you will not, like this vile anonymous scribbler, say that I have lost it. Lost it! does a woman lose her heart? What is meant by losing the heart? Is it to love first, without a certainty of being loved? Can a woman who respects herself do this?

I would you were here, Angelica! Oh! how I wished for you on that painful

morning! After I had sealed my letter to you, I was going to send for Caroline, but having first read the note over again, I was struck with the consequences of her seeing it—I love her, most dearly love her, and I know not that I have a thought I would conceal from her—but when I reflected that the ideas which would be raised by the contents of the note would accompany her thoughts in whatever future intercourse the family might have with Sir Francis Darrell, and whenever he should be the subject of conversation, I hesitated:—what a relief would it have been to me had you been here! I did not, however, hesitate long upon the part I was to take—Caroline loves me, and although it was a degrading charge, she could not but know that it was a malicious unfounded one.—The consciousness of its having been made by a stranger might create some awkwardness in me, but never would she encrease it by her knowledge of it—she would rather help to take it off. Besides, even were we not upon these terms, it was incumbent upon me to make the circumstance known. In

making these reflections, however, I recovered coolness enough not to treat it with the importance my first impulse would have given it, by sending in a hurry for my cousin, and I determined to produce the note at breakfast with great composure. While I was dressing, my father sent for the letter that I had written to you, and it was dispatched that morning.

In spite of my resolution, I could not help being considerably affected in giving the note to Caroline, whom I found alone in the breakfast-room: — I said that I had received a letter which had shocked me very much, and that I could not account for being made the subject of such unjust and injurious observations.

"My dear Augusta," said Caroline, when she had read it, "it is not only a very foolish, but a very wicked contrivance, intended to injure Sir Francis, as well as to insult you, — I would treat it with contempt."

"As far as I can," said I, — "but it is evident, that not only he is at-

tacked, but that I am talked of. If he is the man the note represents him, we ought never to see him again; and if he is slandered, which I believe, how shall I feel myself in company with him, with the consciousness of being said to be, as the note says?"

"It will be a painful feeling, I allow," replied Caroline, "but you must endeavour to overcome it by reflecting that he is not aware of it. We will consult my uncle and George."

"Who can the writer be," cried I, "and why pitch upon me for his malice, who have never injured him?" —

"Injured whom?" cried George, who came in at that moment.

On hearing the circumstance, he at first looked serious, but soon resuming his cheerful countenance:

"Aha! *Mia Signorina,*" said he, jestingly, "you must take your share of the fruits of beauty and goodness: — this is a grand compliment to you; had you been ugly and vile, no envious minx would have treated you with this distinction."

"Envious minx!" cried I — "Do you then imagine it to be written by a woman?" —

"It was my first thought," said George, "for what but envy can be the cause of it?"

"Don't you think," said Caroline, "that there may be jealous men as well as envious women?" —

"I am sure there are," replied George, "but the fact is, that Lady Betty Bramblebear first came into my head."

"My dear George," exclaimed I, "do you imagine her capable of such an action? She must be lost to all sense of virtue, all delicacy, if she can be the author of such a note."

"It is not the first anonymous note she has been accused of," replied he: "it is pretty well known that her acquaintance with Darrell had its commencement that way."

"Oh!" cried I, "what must he think of our sex!"

"My dear Augusta," said George, "men will form their opinions according to their experience, and I fear that Sir

Francis's hitherto has not been v favourable to the ladies; but his fine understanding and good heart—and I am now perfectly convinced he possesses both — will rescue him from this error, if they have not already: — he is very young, only turned of five-and-twenty, and we must manage to give a new colour to the experience that *is to come*: — he has captivated me, and I have no doubt of his proving one of the first characters of his country. Lady Mount-Vernon will open his eyes; you and Caroline shall have a share in his conviction. Your father and I, with Vernon, and other friends, will endeavour to make him feel, that society is not the odious thing he may have had too good reason to believe it."

How nobly was this said of George! It gave me great pleasure. Dear Caroline said it was evident his nature was good, which I cordially echoed; but I could not help adding that it made me the more uneasy, to reflect that the person who could write me such a note, would not scruple to impress upon him

that I was the weak creature it represented.

"I do not think it likely," replied George, "for if it is, as I suspect, it would be against her own schemes." "I confess," continued he, "that that lady is so sunk in my opinion, that, although I agree with Lady Mount-Vernon, that one should not hastily shut the door against those with whom we are in social communication, I am persuaded it is already time to break off all intercourse with her: — vice and virtue cannot mix."

"Can it be," said I, "an attachment to Sir Francis Darrell, and the fear of losing his attentions that can have reduced her to such a contrivance as this?"

"Lose his attentions!" exclaimed he, "I will not answer for *her* attachment, but I am certain that he pays her no attentions; I know too, that the appearances at Malvern last autumn cost him infinite pain."

This opinion of George's corroborated Mr. Vernon's observations at the time;

but though I was pleased at it, I could not help regarding that it was clear the world thought there was some truth in it, or at least talked of it, or it would never have been the subject of the paragraph read at Mount-Vernon by Lord Mariton, though that had proved false.

"The *world*," replied George, "is a word of multifarious meaning, according to the persons using it: — in politics it means all who concern themselves with the affairs of government and connection of nations: — in divinity, it means polemical writers and readers: — in taste, it means those who discern, or pretend to discern, the sublime and beautiful in all their varieties, from the snow-capped summits of the Alps, to the bow-knot on your shoe, including all the regions of Fancy, the poet and the player, the musician and the dancer: — in love, it means the crowd who are vigilantly watching for faux-pas, and elopements; and it sometimes means a single person, which I believe to be the case, my dear Augusta, with your pre-

sent world, for I suspect that that paragraph was written and inserted by Lord Mariton. It was read and forgotten, with other paragraphs, except by himself, and we know his motive for talking of it at Mount-Vernon."

"It was of him, I thought," said Caroline, "when I alluded to jealous men in answer to your envious women, and it is as likely that the note should be his invention as the paragraph."

"It may be his," replied George, "for he is weak; and disappointment may have prompted this petty revenge: but of the two, I am more inclined to think it Lady Betty's."

"You surprise me," said I: "is it possible that, in a country like England, slander and falsehood are allowed such open and public means of injury? I can more easily account for the baseness of the note; — the secrecy of it is more natural, if any thing bad can be natural; the other seems to me a national insult."

"In England," said George, "no one is restrained from doing or saying

whatever he pleases. The only legal restriction that exists, consists in the fear of punishment: — punishments enough we have, perhaps too many, and too severe."

"I have always thought that it was better, when possible, to prevent than punish crimes."

"No doubt; but the licentiousness of the ill-disposed and thoughtless finds means to vent itself in the jealousy for liberty of the well-disposed; and in general the nation is not the worse for trusting the prevention of crimes to the influences of their moral and religious systems:— preventive laws there are, but of these there must first be a breach, before determined bad spirits can be got rid of."

"But what punishment," said I, "is there for the paragraph containing so vile a slander?"

"For slander," replied George, "there is a very severe one according to the circumstances of it; but in this paragraph there is no direct slander: it is an insinuation so couched as not to be laid

hold of. But it is not only in cases where suspicion affords some ground for such annoyances, that the writers of the day give a loose to their pens; some of the most virtuous and honourable characters are attacked with false insinuations, merely for entertaining a difference of opinion in politics."

"What is done," said I, "on such occasions?"

"It is become a principle," replied he, "among men of honour, not to suffer themselves to be annoyed by such low, wanton attacks, when they consist of insinuations which contain no direct application. They leave no stain or blemish."

"How comes it then," said I, "that Sir Francis Darrell has suffered so much from the world?"

"It is from himself," cried George, "that he has suffered. It was he that quarrelled with the world; and the world will not be quarrelled with, without hitting some hard blows. The fact I take to be, that there is some real cause for self-reproach, which his sensibility

has nourished from an early period of his life, and cannot throw off. He entered the world, as it is called, telling it that he despised, hated, and defied it; — that men were monsters, and he one of them. The world took him at his word as to the last assertion, and did its utmost to give him a hideous shape, which amused the light and alarmed the good. This is the mystery of Darrell's situation; and from the stories which were told, whether well-founded or not, I was induced like many others to shut my door against him. What he may have to reproach himself with, I know not; I believe, whatever it may be, that there are few men who would not have discharged it from their minds long ago; and if ever there was a generous, humane, noble-minded, amiable fellow, it is Darrell."

I cannot express to you my delight at this speech of George's, which he concluded with great warmth. I felt the truth of it; and the images of the event in France, of the day at Grove Park, and of the evening on which Lady

Mount-Vernon called, passed rapidly through my mind. — "Yes, George," thought I, for I did not express it, our attention being called to my father, "he is what you say."

Here my father came in, and of course the subject was renewed. On reading the anonymous note, he was almost as much shocked as I had been. He said it was monstrous that the private feelings of individuals should be tortured by strangers and unthinking creatures, merely for the purpose of carrying their own disgraceful plans into execution. He was inclined to concur in George's suspicion, from what he had seen and heard of Lady Betty. He observed, that such an infamous note as that, could not but throw me into a very awkward situation, whether the contents had been made known to Sir Francis or not; yet he trusted, he said, to the strength of my mind to defeat its malice, by erasing it, if possible, from my memory, and conducting myself as if I had never received it; and he concluded with an eulogium on Sir Francis Darrell

in the same strain, and as warmly as George's. I owned the pain I felt, but promised to do my best in acting as he advised, so that the mean, unworthy stratagem was foiled. At least I hope so, for I have not since seen Sir Francis, and what I have now to relate to you makes it more a hope than a certainty, for, though but a short conversation, it has made a very great impression on my mind. I will give it you as it took place.

After breakfast, my father and George left the room, while Caroline and I were standing by the fire, admiring two hand-screens which a friend of George's had just brought from Paris. As soon as we were alone, she looked at me with a smile, and, putting the screen she held in her hand over my face, she said:

"Those eyes of yours, Augusta, express more than you feel." —

"How do you mean?" cried I, a little surprised at the remark.

"I will tell you," replied she, "but first let me ask you, and I am sure you

will tell me sincerely, have you any idea of the passion of love?"

"What a question, Caroline?"—

"I mean," said she, "whether you have ever met in Italy, or England, with any man for whom you felt such a preference as might induce you to think of marriage?"

"This is a question I understand," said I, "and I will answer it very sincerely: — I never have."

"I am not sorry to hear it," said she, "for it is exactly the answer I wished. And now I will tell you what I mean by your eyes expressing more than you feel. When George spoke in such warm terms of Sir Francis, I am sure your emotion was gratitude, but your countenance expressed something more; — nay, don't shrink, my dear Augusta," continued she, taking my hand, "I do not mean *the passion of love* — but your eyes certainly glistened uncommonly. Now I wish what I am going to say may be agreeable to you; but, if not, I am sure you love me too well to be offended with me. You acknowledge

your heart to be completely free and disengaged."

"What are you about, Caroline?"

"To tell you what has come into my mind, and what would make me very happy."

As she said this, I looked very earnestly at her; I feared what was to follow, but there was such an affectionate smile upon her face, that all apprehension gave way to the love and confidence she inspired, and I felt prepared to talk to her upon the subject I anticipated.

"Will you, my dear coz," continued she, "allow me to go on?"

"My dear Caroline," cried I, "are you not my second self? — my other Angelica?"

"But the subject is very delicate," said she, "and one I know you would hardly think of considering yourself; — I will however go on. I believe you, when you say, you have no preference for any man that would induce you to think of marriage; but are you not sen-

sible of a preference that places one man above all others in your estimation and regard ?"

I returned her dear affectionate smile, and I surprised her with my reply, though she expected the utmost candour from me.

" I *am*, my dear Caroline," said I, " and that man is Sir Francis Darrell, and my eyes did not belie me when they told you so, on George's praises of him ; but do not, my dear cousin, mortify me so much as to suspect me of being in love ; leave that for Lady Betty."

" It would mortify me as well as you," said my dear Caroline, " if your disposition were that of a falling-in-love young lady ; but you may without that go as far as I do, and in the same sense allow yourself to love and be captivated. Now I declare to you that both George and I are captivated with him and love him ; and I will treat you with such unbounded candour as to tell you, that I have brought on this conversation from George's

having said to me, after my uncle left us last night, "I would give the world if Augusta were his wife!"

Heavens, Angelica! what words! Your Augusta the wife of Sir Francis Darrell! and from the mouths of Caroline Godfrey and George!

"I see your surprise," continued she; "but I also see with pleasure, that it is not accompanied with any sign of dissatisfaction."

Indeed, my surprise was so great that I could make no immediate answer, and she went on speaking.

"I participate George's feelings," said she; "I would give the world you were his wife. To make use of an expression too often used improperly,— 'You seem to me formed for each other:' you, to recover for him happiness, by uniting with love those principles of religion, which alone can restore peace to a wounded spirit; he, to appreciate the double prize he would obtain in you."

However unmerited this praise, my

dear Angelica, it was no compliment of Caroline to me. She loves me with a partiality that gave her expression all the value of sincerity. She continued:

"My dear Augusta, I do not mean to advise you to lay yourself out to captivate him; it is beneath you; nor is it necessary. I think you have already done that without any premeditated effort: what I could wish, what I do wish you to do, is to admit the thought into your mind with a sufficiently favourable bias to give me the pleasure of hoping that, if circumstances led to a declaration on his part —"

I here shook my head.

"Why do you shake your head?" cried she: "as you have no previous prepossession, would not you make us happy, supposing my uncle of our opinion?"

I own I felt a pleasure in listening to Caroline, and therefore did not interrupt her; but when she put the question in this manner I could not help saying:

"Has my father joined in your wish?"

"I have not seen him since, but in company with you," replied she; "but I have no doubt he will."

"Oh! I hope not," cried I; "I hope not. Indeed he will not, for he knows it is not in my power."

"Not in your power?"

"You see, Caroline," said I, "that I have listened to you, not only without dissatisfaction, but with an attention from which you may suppose, if you please, that your wish would not meet much opposition from me. You know, that I agree with you in opinion respecting the merit, and amiable manners of Sir Francis Darrell, but you forget, my dear cousin, the insuperable bar between us. I can never be his wife. He does not even suffer the character of Christian to be given to him. I think not of marriage; but if ever I am induced to do so, I will have no husband who is not a complete Christian."

"But that," cried Caroline," is my hope."

"I fear," said I, "that your hope would stop short of mine."

"I understand you," said she; "but, my dear Augusta, we know that marriages frequently take place between persons of your church and ours; and, indeed, I understand very happy ones."

"I could not be happy," replied I; "and if it affects my happiness in some degree now, what would it do in the relation you wish! Indeed, Caroline, it must not be."

"I will not say you are too rigid," said she, "but time and reflection —"

I again shook my head.

"Well!" cried she, "we will drop the conversation at present, resolving, at least, to do what we can to restore him to a state of comfort, and to make him a complete Christian."

"What would I not give to do that?" cried I.

We then resolved to act, in respect to Lady Betty, as if the note had never

been received; and we persuaded ourselves that Sir Francis had no suspicion of its contents.

Good night to my dear Angelica.

AUGUSTA.

LETTER XLVIII.

Sir Francis Darrell to Mr. Godfrey.

May Fair. * * *

MY DEAR SIR,

NEVER, I believe, was man more peculiarly circumstanced than I am, though it is not difficult for me to trace the causes of my peculiar situation. They are, indeed, evident enough; but the situation itself is most singular. Is it credible that the man who last year was execrated, who was talked of as a fiend, and shunned as a corrupter, should now be absolutely courted into friendship by two such families as yours and Lord Mount-Vernon's? should, at this moment, be an object of interest in the mind of one of the purest and most sensible of women? It is, however, the fact; I

am proud of it, and could I be happy, I could find on earth no greater cause of happiness.

I fear, my dear Mr. Godfrey, that you, and your worthy uncle and cousin, ascribe more merit to certain actions of mine, than is their due; and I am sensible that it is those actions that have produced such feelings towards me, which I confess have had a very extraordinary effect upon my mind. What I have done, and what I do, of the nature which has gained your kindness, have their source in selfish feelings; and I know myself too well to ascribe them to genuine generosity. Wealth is nothing to a man without peace of mind; I have it, and it is nothing to me, except as I make it a small weight in the scale, against a heavy balance of misery. Had I been happy, I might have squandered it like many others;—wretched, I have turned it to uses which afford me the only satisfaction I have in life. Among those are what you attribute to me as generosity and noble-mindedness, whereas they are peculiarly selfish. Let their estimate, however, be

what it may, I have never felt so much comfort in their effects, as in reflecting on the interest they have raised for me in your family, as in contemplating the change that has been wrought upon my mind by events apparently casual, which have given me such a friend as Miss Saville, whose name I am almost afraid to mention, and to whom I owe more than to any other being upon the face of the earth. She has, indeed, been a tutelary angel to me, and I feel an inexpressible desire to continue, under her auspices, the pursuit to which she gave a spring — but there are two great difficulties in my way; the appearance of hypocritical sentimentality that attends the professed study of religion, which I could surmount, as the profession is accompanied with a candid avowal that I make little or no progress; the other, and far less removable difficulty arises from my apprehension of an impropriety, involving an injury, in my attempting to be considered in any peculiar way by a lady to whom I have not, *and never can have* any other pretension than that of a

friend. Will you make it one of the first proofs of the friendship you have determined to honour me with, to give me your counsel on these points? I once took the liberty of writing a short note on the subject of my studies to your cousin. I am not sure that I was right in doing it then. I am quite sure that I should be wrong now, if I were to persist without taking your opinion, or Mr. Saville's, on the propriety of it. The reason I have preferred addressing myself to you is, that there would be a kind of formality in writing to him, which might have borne a construction not intended, and placed him in an unpleasant situation; whereas you will be able to speak your mind without any such awkward feeling; for, however I may *hope* a favourable opinion, I *expect* a candid one.

When Miss Saville, in a moment of charity and pity, set me a lesson of religion, she did not mean to have a troublesome pupil; but, if you think it proper to give her the inclosed, I hope she will not be displeased at my desire of proving how seriously I have attended to my task,

and of assuring her of my gratitude as long as I live. I take it for granted that you will consult Mr. Saville. Should I be right in my suspicion of an impropriety, have the goodness to return the inclosed in your answer. Believe me,

My dear Sir,

Faithfully and gratefully yours,

F. DARRELL.

LETTER XLIX.

Sir Francis Darrell to Miss Saville.

(Inclosed in the foregoing Letter.)

My reflections and feelings, since the day I spent at your cousin's, impel me to address another note to you. I have not spent such a day since I left school. I am very grateful for it — grateful to your cousins, to Mr. Saville, to Lady Mount-Vernon, to Vernon and his brother, and to you, my good and amiable tutoress; allow me to call you so, who have roused me to reflection, and put my books into my hands. I have been, perhaps, the most unhappy of men, but my feelings that day convinced me that Nature meant to do better for me than I have done for myself: — they convince me too that they who have excited them mean, now, better for me than *that self* is equal to. I unhappily thwarted Nature — I will endeavour not to thwart friendship, —yet

I cannot suddenly throw off repulsive habits, nor bring my imagination under that dominion, which is necessary to the accomplishment of their kind intention — but they will bear with me — I see that they are determined to bear with me.

You will perhaps have to bear with me the most, if you continue as interested on the subject of my task as you were when you did me the honour to set it. I have made very little progress in my Bible; I have made some by reflection; but even this is clouded — it has hardly opened upon me, and that since I saw you. If you recollect what passed during the few minutes I had the pleasure of conversing with you before dinner, you will find that I expressed my embarrassment on the subject of immortality. I particularly stated how little the mass of mankind were entitled to it. I am by no means entirely clear of that difficulty; but I am nevertheless at present convinced of the necessity of a state of immortality after this life; and my conviction arises from reflecting on the nature of God: — that nature must include the idea of

goodness. I find myself compelled to believe him *good*, or not to believe in him at all. But if he is good, there must be a state of future existence after this life: I am therefore convinced that there is. This being impressed upon my mind, I have read all the other arguments for it with satisfaction; — that is, my doubts are cleared away, but I am still at a loss on some points, and particularly how to dispose of the mass of mankind.

When I confess to you the progress I have made, you cannot but see the unspeakable obligation I am under to you. You cannot wonder that I am anxious to assure you of my gratitude. By pursuing the enquiries you persuaded me to enter upon, I have acquired an astonishing privilege, the use of which has given more relief to my woe-worn spirit than I ever hoped it would experience.—I mean the privilege of holding mental communication with the Deity. — Oh! it is inestimable! More than I can make you sensible of.

With all this advantage I am obliged to own, that I am still groping in the dark.

There is another character of Deity I cannot trace — LOVE. I can understand how chastening the guilty may be a proof of Love; but when virtue itself is forsaken — when the simple-minded, single-hearted, meek, resigned, unoffending, are visited with horrors of every kind, where is the love of an Omniscient Being? Is it to be shown in another life? — Oh! but the sufferings of some in this! I could tell you such sufferings. In that case too it would be more like justice than love. Justice is a harsh attribute in some respects :— I am inclined to think it more connected with human than Divine nature. I perhaps do not express myself properly. — I cannot mean that I think justice is or ought to be out of the nature of the Deity; — but I conceive his goodness better than I do his justice. Shakspeare expresses my meaning when he makes Hamlet say to Polonius — "Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping!" "Use them *after your own honour and dignity*." The actual state of mankind is so full of misery — where is LOVE? Yet it is an essential part of the

nature of the Deity.— Help me, help me, I beseech you, my amiable tutoress: — You have done much for me; do more.

You will here perhaps again refer me to my books: — I must therefore candidly tell you how little way I have made. I have read the greater part of the Bible since I left Grove Park, and I have found some admirable things in it. I entered upon the perusal with a resolution to be convinced, if possible, of its being the word of God; and as a necessary preparation I admitted, and found no great difficulty in admitting, the use of miracles in a divine dispensation. He that made nature can suspend it. The belief of a God removes that difficulty.

Another preparation I made was not to be kept back by obscurities attending the account of the creation. Time may obscure truth. Many of the objections too, which I had supported, such as the inconsistency of a curse, which was but the previous nature of the animal cursed, the serpent having being created a reptile; such as the account of the creation being inconsistent with the facts of astro-

nomy, and other similar things, I threw aside as imputable to the imperfection of language as well as the influence of time. I opened the book to find the nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of redemption; and I wished, sincerely wished, to find the religion it is said to contain true—that religion being, according to my conception, briefly this—that in consequence of the imperfection of created beings, and the freedom of will bestowed upon some of them by their Creator, certain orders of creatures mistook real happiness, and by opposing the will of God lost their station; that they involved man, who was created good, in their destruction, by corrupting his nature; that man, so corrupted, was lost to all hope of life and happiness; that he led a miserable, irrational existence, full of horrors, on the globe where he was first placed; and that after a few years he died and was reduced to dust; that though God foresaw those evil effects of creation and freedom of action, he did not abstain from giving existence, the good and glory of that immense act of power being cer-

tain, infinitely beyond the evil that was to ensue, and to have prevented which would have decreased, would have foiled that good and that glory that were to be the consequence of freedom of action;—that as corruption cannot be blended with purity mankind must have been cut off from every hope of happiness, had not God in his foresight provided a remedy for this corruption, and for redeeming them from it; and that the Christian dispensation is that remedy. This I believe to be fairly the sum and substance of the religion you think necessary to salvation. I have no hesitation in saying I wish to find this system true. It is impossible to open one's eyes, and not see that mankind are in a state of misery and corruption, and who would not wish a remedy found for it?

My investigation so stated, I think, will give you pleasure — why must I dash away the little that I am able to give? But it would be an ill compliment to you; it would be a mockery of the Deity, if I were to pretend to conviction merely on a wish. That there is a God,

a state of corruption, and a remedy, is a doctrine that I am ready to receive; I will receive it from your mouth, from that of any friend; and I confess my blindness, or rather my perversion of mind, in having been so long a determined opposer of it: — but if there is something like it in the Bible, there is also so much to subvert it, and to destroy conviction, that it has retarded rather than advanced the progress of my studies. The Jehovah of the Jews, like the Jupiter of the heathen, is an imaginary deity made up of human passions, irascible, vindictive, unjust, partial, and any thing but the God of Love. It is not necessary to point out the passages where this description of his nature is to be found, or where he appears hardening the heart for the purpose of punishing: — he is made sufficiently to declare himself: "I am a jealous God," — "I will avenge," we meet with every-where in the Old Testament. No; He is not to be seen, or rather, he is sadly disfigured and calumniated in it. The nature of

man, indeed, appears there, as in all other histories, bad, bad.

With respect to redemption, allowing the miracles, for I cannot think miracles ought to be a stumbling-block in the way of a man who admits a God, I confess I have met with some of the most delightful and soothing assurances and precepts that were ever given to man, and which place the giver of them far above the vindictive Jehovah of the Jews. If this letter were not already too long, I could quote to you some passages in the New Testament that have charmed me beyond every thing I ever read, far even beyond my admired Plato, whom his cotemporaries called the Divine. But in writing this I fear I am only preparing my kind tutoress for a grievous disappointment. I can imagine the creation of a man without a father or mother by the grand "Let it be" which so sublimely marks the power of God in the Old Testament. — It is a miracle. — The doctrine so far is not my difficulty, which arises, not from a miracle, but an impossibility, an incongruity, — remem-

ber I write with reverence. The sacrifice of God, to appease God, for the corruption of man, is not a miracle: it appears to me a shocking combination of words that no ideas can be affixed to. This, too, looks something like the vindictiveness of the Jehovah of the Jews, and to carry it so far as to satisfy the passion even by self-sacrifice. Nay, this vindictive spirit is absolutely declared by the chief of the Apostles, who, even in the inculcating of forgiveness, tells us to use it from a motive of revenge, for by so doing we shall heap coals of fire on the head of the person we forgive. A more horrid torture, one that not only sets the head but the heart on fire, and gives even to thought the torment of inextinguishable flames, could not have been invented by the most ingenious inquisitor. Besides this, the superlative denunciations of eternal pain of the most excruciating kind far, far exceed the retribution of human crime.

I am now giving you pain. — I will cease — I know you will forgive me when I tell you that I feel much consolation in

opening the state of my mind to one who has been of such service to me, and to consider whom as my friend is the proudest feeling of my life. I do sincerely wish I could overcome my objections to the religion delivered in the Bible as a revelation from the Almighty himself, for the truth is, that, like Agrippa, I am "almost persuaded to be a Christian." And if I could fall upon any candid mode of becoming one, I would adopt it. I have thought sometimes, that if my understanding were satisfied in part — but then it must be in the essential part — can that be?

I will conclude my letter with three questions, which are riddles to me, and I will put them as such to you. If you will solve them, or procure me a solution of them, I will deal differently with my understanding than I have done. It shall not deter me in other points — but, alas! I know it is impossible. —

Can human passions, and particularly vindictiveness, be attributed to God? and are they not so in the Bible?

Is not St. Paul's motive for forgiving

an enemy, that is, to heap coals of fire on his head, worse than an open denial of forgiveness?

Can God be a victim?

You see, my amiable tutoress, what you have brought upon yourself; but you are fully at liberty to take the assistance of Mrs. Godfrey, and also of Mr. Godfrey and Mr. Saville. I have already, through your means, recovered a portion of comfort, if not of happiness; and to be a Christian, sincerely so, that is — to believe that the sin of man has been removed, and that he has been redeemed from perdition, would, I think, add so much more comfort to my little stock, as to deserve the name of happiness. May God bless you all!

I am

Your very sincere and grateful friend,

F. Darrell.

LETTER L.

Mr. Godfrey to Sir Francis Darrell.

MY DEAR SIR FRANCIS,

NEITHER my uncle nor I had the slightest hesitation in delivering your letter to my cousin, who has given me the enclosed for you. She tells me that she has explained to you the liberty I took with your letter, which I know you will forgive in consideration of the result of it. Your letters have given us all very great pleasure. I think all your misfortune arises from too great susceptibility, but you must and shall be happy in future. We cannot be persuaded that we attribute more to you than you merit — but I will not talk to you of merit or obligation; I will only say that your friendship is a source of great pleasure to us all, and I trust it will be as lasting as life.

Will you dine with me to-morrow? Remember we meet the day after at Lady Mount-Vernon's ball.

Yours most faithfully,

GEORGE GODFREY.

LETTER LI.

Miss Saville to Sir Francis Darrell.

Hanover-Square.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE peculiar circumstances of my life would render it extreme ingratitude in me, if I could fail feeling a sincere interest in your welfare; but, independent of those, I feel it an honour to have had the slightest share in drawing your attention to considerations which have been followed by comfort to you. I pray that it may be encreased in every respect, and I beg you to accept my thanks for the letter I received from you by my cousin Godfrey. Notwithstanding the pain which some parts of it could not but give, I read it with the greatest pleasure, for I saw throughout that Providence was graciously leading you to the knowledge

of those truths which cannot fail to restore you to happiness. That those are contained in the Bible I firmly believe; but I am by no means well read in it, and I believe that it requires more learning and more acuteness of intellect to be well understood, than fall to the lot of most of those who are directed by the religion and the precepts it contains. I have no pretensions to those myself; but that there is much comfort to be derived from the perusal of it by persons of every degree of understanding I am convinced.

You will not, I hope, think the worse of me if I own to you that I was guided into the faith I profess, and that in reading the Bible I have met with the subjects of it as things known, not as things to be studied. They seem to me to be so calculated for the advantage of mankind, that they cannot but be true;—but the arguments, which are required by those who think it proper to examine every point minutely, are far out of my reach; and, if it were not too bold in writing to you, I would say, I think them

unnecessary where the essential truths are so plain.

You do but justice in thinking that my father and cousins feel great interest in your welfare and happiness; and I made use of the liberty you allowed me to consult them on the subjects of your letter, which I left in the hands of my cousin Godfrey for a few days. He has taken a greater liberty with it than was permitted to me, but I beg and trust you will pardon it, in consideration of the enclosed which he has just sent to me with your letter. It is one to him from his friend the Bishop of * *, to whom he communicated yours; and, though *I* should probably have chosen another person to advise with, had I had your sanction, I see such goodness and wisdom in his answer to my cousin, that I cannot hesitate a moment to send it to you, with the greatest hope that you will find in it all that is wanted to give your own excellent understanding fair play; and then you will need no other aid to make you *altogether* a Christian. I will not detain you from it, but conclude,

with the united best wishes of your friends here for its proving a new cordial to you.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your very grateful friend,

Augusta Saville.

LETTER LII.

*The Bishop of * * to Mr. Godfrey.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I AM rather busy at present, but I will make time to throw a few observations upon paper in compliance with your request; —indeed, the subject demands it of me: and I am also induced by the great pleasure I felt in the perusal of Sir Francis Darrell's letter. Your excellent father was a good Christian, yet he sometimes made himself unhappy in doubting it, and would confess himself to me with as much solicitude as ever Catholic did to his confessor, in order to get my elucidation. It seems to be the nature of some men to choose difficult paths in preference to plain ones, perhaps because they are common. It is like climbing over a steep rock to get into a garden, in preference to raising the easy latch of the gate. There is no accounting for this

disposition. I believe Messrs. Gall and Spurzheim would find it out in some of the protuberances of the skull. I rather think it is owing to a faulty imagination, which disdains an easy prize. Your friend has been labouring at rocks and mountains on the outside of our garden, the summits of which are ascended by gentle and pleasant passages from the inside.

The enquirer after Christianity, who begins by asking "Can God be a victim?" has to grapple with an obstacle that he will never surmount in the position he has taken. To change the allegory: the Christian religion should be studied synthetically, not analytically; — the a, b, c, should be acquired, like that of other learning, in the early stages of life; we get the knowledge we know not how, and we examine our knowledge at leisure and to advantage as we grow up. If we stay till we are adults before we learn to read, we may learn, but with great difficulty, for we acquire habits and prejudices from those around us that impede us.

I do not wonder at your friend's embarrassment on his reading the Bible —

the wonder would have been if he had not been embarrassed. But the manner in which he prepared himself to enter upon the reading of it is highly creditable to him, and shows that he is not one of those unhappy persons who attack the tenets and history of our religion in the vanity of displaying talent and philosophical acuteness. He wishes to be a Christian; he therefore deserves to be a Christian, and I really think I may say, he is a Christian, though he will be more fully so.

There are many more difficulties in the Bible than those Sir Francis Darrell has stated, but at present I can only take notice of those. The apparent attribution of passions to the Almighty, and that vindictiveness we read of, are certainly enough to confound the acuteness of the philosopher, and to make him cry out against the dominion and existence of such a Being. In this respect men of talents take the book up to great disadvantage; they take it up, not to be satisfied with what they find, but to detect its incongruities and expose its deformities. Men of humble and common capacities,

which is the general lot, take what they comprehend, and do not trouble themselves about the rest. To these the Bible may be trusted; it is a treasure to the poor and the meek; it is peculiarly their treasure, and they ought not to be robbed of it. But the ingenious and the proud, and of all pride that of the understanding is the most dangerous, should never enter upon the study till they can prevail upon themselves to suspect the fallibility of their own powers, and to take assistance from others, with a determination to rely not altogether, but considerably, on the powers of those they may consult. I could tell Sir Francis that a very great man of our own times, now no more, a very successful, if not the most successful, advocate of Christianity, laid it down as a principle, that the difficulties of the Old Testament did not affect the Christian religion, but this would not be obviating his difficulty, and I fear would look like telling him to put the Old Testament on the shelf with Herodotus, which is not my intention, for in the Mosaic history lie the found-

ations of Christianity — but he will do well to study that writer.

The difficulty in this instance may be got over in the same way that the astronomical inconsistences are reconciled, which is, that in that early state of the world the information that was necessary and proper for man was conveyed in language agreeing with his ordinary notions derived from his own senses and feelings. The vengeance of the Almighty has, in fact, as little reference to passion as the common notion of the rising and the setting of the sun to the facts of the solar system; and yet to this day the vulgar believe that the sun moves over the earth from east to west; so they believe that crime provokes anger: — the denunciations of God have that appearance; but what is the fact? The natural world is not more regulated on cause and effect, than the moral world. Freedom of action is given, but each action will have its appointed result here and hereafter — and this is the vengeance of God; this his vindictiveness. Does any man of reflection, when he reads in the se-

cond commandment, "I am a jealous God," image to himself the sensation and the marks of the passion of jealousy? What is the real sense of that passage? From the corruption which the evil spirit has introduced among you, some of you will be led to the egregious folly of worshipping false gods and idols. The consequences of denying the true God, and following the temptations of the devil, will involve you and your children in the miseries that evil produces. This denunciation, which has been one of the balls kept up by the sceptics, is evidently the effect of a cause in the general system of moral nature, in which, as well as in the physical system, the dignity of the Deity appears in acting generally by secondary causes.—I say generally, because in departing occasionally from them he peculiarly manifests his providence and his love. But yet rather than depart from them he adopts warnings and expiations. And what a proof of love was the grand, the sublime expiation of the cross! We might suppose him altering his systems both natural and

moral, and system after system, annihilating man and his corrupter, and raising a mechanical creation; but would he, even in *our* comprehension, have been exalted by such unstable acts? No; from the first he foresaw the evil of freedom, and his love provided the remedy; and your friend, as he proceeds, will find that our God is a God of love. I hope what I have said will be a satisfactory solution of his first question: — I coulddwell much longer upon it, but this will give him ground; and his own understanding, and I will say happy disposition, will do the rest for him.

His second question, I think, is the result of a hasty reading. St. Paul could not propose forgiveness, as a designing mode of encreasing the gratification of revenge; — nor are the words originally his: — " The consequence of your forgiving an enemy," says he, " is good to yourself, it is acting on the principles of your master, and you will find the comfort of it in your own breast: — as for your enemy, if he has any feeling, it will make him sorry." He quotes the

passage from Solomon ; — it is in the 25th chapter of his Proverbs. Sir Francis's language is very strong on this point ; and most certainly, in a feeling breast, forgiveness must create remorse ; but so much the better, for remorse leads to repentance ; and sincere repentance, since the death of Christ, washes away guilt.

The third question is not fairlyput : — Christians do not say that "God is a victim," but that there is a mysterious union of so intimate a nature between God and the Spirit of Christ, that they consider themselves warranted, both from the perception of his character, and the text of the Gospel, to call him God. This is not a miracle, but a mystery, and in mysteries the understanding must give way. It is remarkable, that some of the mysteries have striking analogies, as if these were intended to assist us in our efforts to conceive them. That death should lead to life, is a mystery, but it is beautifully typified in the transformation of grubs to winged creatures after deposing their remains in a chrysalis. The union of three in one is clearly typified in man, who is com-

posed of three distinct natures, Intellect, Passion, and Appetite : — and man is said to be formed in the image of his Maker. But, after all, we can have but faint glimpses of the nature of God, and it is of no great importance to us in this life, to know more than we do. I cannot, however think the difficulty of this union of Christ with God so great as to be rejected, even by the understanding. In common phraseology we should call such a character *divine*, and when we Christians consider the unspeakable benefits we derive from him, I do not see that we are to blame or to be ridiculed for believing him when he informs us of his being so closely allied to the Deity. Yet let not Sir Francis disturb himself with this at present — let him observe the less mysterious tenets and the grand object of the Gospel, and, my word for it, he will, before he has done, feel that it is in a manner necessary to the perfection of God's will.

Before I conclude, I will add a few words on some other parts of his letter. I hope I have already convinced him, that God is a God of love ; — but he puts

the question in another sense, when reflecting on the miseries of life. Indiscriminate misery is the consequence of the corruption of nature, and the redemption is not from the lot into which it threw mankind in this world. We are particularly directed to consider this world as a vale of tears, wherein we may work out for ourselves a state of immortal happiness; and it is probable that earthly misery will have some good effect either in preparing for it, or enhancing the bliss. But indeed I think even the lot of men on earth is much softened, and that they enjoy a good deal of happiness. The generality of our kind are clearly undergoing the penalty of original sin; they work for their bread: they gain it by the sweat of their brow. I am old, and I have witnessed some misery, but I have also witnessed a great deal of contentment and joy, in the inferior classes of society, among whom family love and a self-approving conscience, constitute an enviable happiness. Here then are goodness and love manifested, even in this stage of probation; and as to the

exceptions, it is more probable that some concealed benefit is the cause, than that they are owing to desertion.

These observations may also serve as an answer for the state of the *mass* of men — because those I have alluded to form the mass. Sir Francis by that word meant the vile and the wicked. It must be confessed, they are but too numerous; — but even for these, hope is not extinct while they live, and after death their spirits will undergo the appointed effects of impenitence.

What those effects may be leads to the only remaining point of the letter. — I cannot enter upon it at large. The church has adopted the doctrine of an endless duration of woe, upon some texts in Scripture; — and in reason one cannot see how it is to be avoided, as the effects of expiation terminate with this life. What can wash away a crime? Repentance. — The time of repentance is gone. If it cannot be recalled — Alas! it is a sad thought — Let not your friend dwell upon the subject — let him turn his thoughts to those delightful passages with

which he has been charmed, and in spite of all difficulties he will be a confirmed Christian.

Pray make my best compliments to him. — You should bring us acquainted. — I should esteem the friendship of such a proselyte a great honour.

I am,

Your affectionate friend,

W. * *

LETTER LIII.

Augusta to Angelica.

MY DEAREST ANGELICA,

I WOULD not detain my last letter, as I thought it would be interesting to you; but I did not then foresee how soon I should have subjects still more important to communicate to my dear sister. How fully has that foolish, wicked, anonymous note been proved unworthy of attention! Congratulate me, Angelica, on the completion of my wishes — my preserver is become a Christian. It was all I desired respecting him; it was my fervent prayer; and it has been granted. He is become a Christian; and his good sense will, I have no doubt, in time lead him to embrace the true communion.

The day after I dispatched my last, my cousin George surprised me with a letter from Sir Francis Darrell. You will

remember the note he sent me by Mr. Vernon. I little thought he continued to consider me as the prompter of his studies; but he has paid me that compliment in a letter that affected me extremely; and I felt at the same time that it did me great honour. The great happiness of my life, Angelica, is participating it with you — is opening my heart to you — is telling you all that occurs to me, and all that I think. I should lose half of my pleasure if you did not know — if you did not share, these grateful events of my life: I shall therefore send you a copy of the correspondence that has taken place.

Sir Francis candidly stated his difficulties and objections to some of the tenets of religion. Alas! my dear sister, though myself convinced of their truth, I am more convinced by my heart than able to convince others by reasoning. His letter gave me a mixture of pleasure and pain: I gave it to George, who, after keeping it three days, returned it to me with a letter to himself from his friend the Bishop of * *, whom I once before

mentioned to you in a letter relative to the occurrences at Manor-House. You will see what a delightful letter it is:—I enclosed it in one from myself to Sir Francis. The pleasure I had in doing this was great: imagine then, Angelica, what it was, what it is, when I tell you that the impression it made upon him was similar to that it made upon me. I cannot express to you how happy this has made me—but you will imagine it from knowing the interest I take in this extraordinary man, to whom I am so much indebted.

George sent the letters to him yesterday, and invited him to dine with us to-day.—He accepted the invitation. My cousin, knowing that he would prefer a family party, asked no one else except his friend, Mr. Vernon, who unfortunately happened to be engaged to dinner, but promised to join us in the evening. How will you be surprised, Angelica, to hear that Caroline and I passed almost the whole day alone with Sir Francis Darrell! To make you understand this, I must tell you that there are frequently

debates of such importance in the House of Commons, that the members cannot leave it till a very late hour, sometimes not till the next morning. I believe you know that my cousin is a Member. My father, though none, takes great interest in the debates, and generally accompanies George to the House. To-day the debate proved to be one that required attendance. Sir Francis came at the usual time, and had sat nearly an hour with us, when Caroline received a note, begging that she would apologize to him, and go to dinner. Imagine my situation, Angelica, after what had passed between Caroline and me the other day, after our conversation on the vile anonymous note: — but in spite of my thoughts I preserved my presence of mind; and, his conversation and manner convincing me that he was completely ignorant of the circumstances about which consciousness gave me an awkward feeling, I recovered my ease, and spent one of the most agreeable days of my life.

Caroline had not only expressed her wish that morning of our conversation,

but she had gone so far as to say, that she thought I had made an impression of a peculiar kind on his heart. Recollecting this, I naturally endeavoured to discover on what grounds she entertained that opinion, and I declare to you I could find none. He was as attentive to her as to me; nay, I thought much more so, and it made me easy and happy on that score. It would indeed be a source of sorrow to me to think that he should form so fruitless an attachment. I believe my conviction of Caroline's error helped to make me pass the day the more pleasantly. He mentioned the receipt of the letters before dinner, but without dwelling on the subject. He said to Caroline:

"Can you help me to words to express my thanks to your excellent husband, and to this task-setting cousin of yours, for the service they have rendered me? No; no language affords them, and I must be content to depend upon their imagination for credit to feelings of the most grateful nature. My difficulties are solved, and your good Bishop shall have

a share of my prayers — but we will not talk upon it now."

This was all that passed on that subject. He started others of a pleasant nature throughout the day — several respecting Italy; and we talked of you.

After dinner I sang for him; and when I was in the middle of a song, Caroline — I thought it unkind — left the room. Her motive was clear to me, and I own, after what had passed, I felt unpleasantly at the moment. — However, I am now glad of it, for nothing could have so clearly proved her mistake as his behaviour while she was absent. Had I made that impression upon him that she supposed, and still supposes, would he not have taken the opportunity to avow it, or to show it in some way? On the contrary, his attention seemed to cease, and he was far more engaged with one of the music-books than in noticing me. It is true, he talked to me, but it was about the composers whose names he met with, their different style, and the music before him, from which he scarcely ever

raised his eyes till Caroline returned. He resumed his attentions to her, and not a word or a look passed the whole day that confirmed her opinion.

In the evening Mr. Vernon came in, but nothing particular occurred, though I could not help remarking some looks which Sir Francis gave him several times while he was playing the guitar, and singing a song which he had himself written for Caroline. I cannot call them frowns, but they brought his *Paris brows* to my mind. Once, while I was at the piano, and Caroline close to me, they were at a little distance, and I observed him speaking in a low voice, but with an energy of action which, though he endeavoured to suppress it, betokened something that caused in him more than a common feeling. It was evidently not the music.— Why should I at the moment suspect I might have been the subject? I am not liable to such suspicions; but, certainly, it was not so, as you will find. Some company came in, and Sir Francis soon after went away, promising Caroline to be at Lady Mount-Vernon's to-morrow

night. Mr. Vernon remained, and even outstaid the company. I thought by his manner he had something particular to say to Caroline, to whom he had occasionally spoken in a low voice during the evening. I took a moment to whisper my idea to her, and an intention to leave the room, as I believed he had some communication to make. She pointedly forbade me to quit her — and we spent full half an hour with him alone before he went away. I have told you that Mr. Vernon is an agreeable man — I do not remember ever to have wished him away before, but he did not appear to me the same person. He suffered the conversation to flag, looked serious, and for minutes gazed thoughtfully at the fire. — He recovered himself, however, and took his leave gaily.

The House of Commons was still sitting, and we received a message from George, that it would probably be late in the morning before it broke up, upon which Caroline proposed going to bed. We had, however, a short conversation,

that I think will interest you; and as I am not sleepy I will add it here.

"Well! Augusta," cried Caroline, as we drew to the fire, "what think you of our day?"

"It has altogether," said I, "been a very pleasant one, and rendered doubly so by the happy impression which has been made on the mind of Sir Francis Darrell."

"And do you continue," said she, smiling, "to think that there is no other happy impression made upon him?"

"You mean by me, Caroline, and I am more and more convinced there is not."

"And why," replied she, continuing her smile, "are you more and more convinced?"

I here made the observations that I have already stated to you, and concluded by saying—

"Not only this, but his letter, his whole conduct, prove that the full extent of his attachment to me is a friendship which has been brought on by peculiar

circumstances, and that his thoughts are in no other respect occupied by me."

"My love," cried she, "I give you great credit for your penetration in all cases except your own—but I find it wanting here. If ever there was a man in love, he is; and I am the more convinced of it by all that convinces you to the contrary."

"Caroline, you surprise and hurt me."

"I may surprise, but I will not hurt you.—Shall we not continue to talk freely to each other?"

"O! yes, yes: say what you please, and I will listen."

"Well then," replied she, "as you will not be hurt, I will repeat to you my firm opinion, that Sir Francis's attachment to you is *Love*. He is evidently acting with restraint on that point, though on no other. I see, too, that he is not a man to make love in the ordinary way, with squeezes of the hand and gazes of the eye; but the turns of his conversation, his over-abundant caution in paying me the greater share of his attention, the very circumstance of his playing with the

music-books and composers' names when you were alone — all in my mind strongly confirm my opinion."

" You do not hurt me, Caroline, but you make me uneasy. If you are right, I shall be very unhappy."

" My dear Augusta, I know the obstacle on your part, and I confess it is a very delicate subject for me to touch upon; but your own good sense, your gratitude, the greatness of restoring this deserving young man to society and to happiness, will have due weight with you. I think I trace the hand of Providence in every thing that has occurred respecting you both. I almost see the conclusion of his will. I will not teaze you, if it is teazing, for his will will be done without it. But let us talk openly. You do not commit yourself by opening all your thoughts to me."

" My dear Caroline, will you persuade me to be in love, to own myself in love, before I am addressed upon the subject, and even while my own conviction is in opposition to yours? for I declare, it still appears to me, in spite of your observ-

ations, that the proofs are on the side of my opinion, — and I hope they are."

"You shall not hope so."

"I must, I must."

"I neither persuade you to be in love, my dear girl, nor, if you were, to own it hastily, even to yourself; but I would have you consider the subject in the light in which I place it to you, — that Sir Francis Darrell is in love, and reason with yourself upon it as if it were the fact, and endeavour to prepare yourself not to counteract the good that would result from a —"

"My dear Caroline!" exclaimed I, before she finished her sentence.

"Well!" said she, "I won't vex you by repeating the impossible word. I will only add, that I have now more reason than when we first conversed on the subject to know that it would not be *very* disagreeable to my uncle."

"And you have been talking to my father, Caroline? and my father to you, and not to me?"

"He will talk with you — he meant it this day, but circumstances have pre-

vented him, and I could not postpone this conversation after the day we have spent; and, to use you with all the openness with which I wish you to use me, it has not been so spent without some little premeditation; for though George could not leave the house, my uncle could, and, in strictness, ought to have joined us at dinner."

"Gracious Heaven! Caroline, are you all then united in a plan against me?"

"Quite the reverse. You are the sole directress in all that concerns you. Nor have my thoughts been kept from you a moment."

"If it is my father's wish, I am, indeed, unfortunate; for he wishes what, I am conscious, ought not to be."

"He certainly wishes it, Augusta; but it will not break his heart if it should never take place."

"It must not take place, Caroline."

"We will leave it then to Providence; and now I am going to mention another subject which will show you how fully open my heart is to you. I am going to talk to you about my own feelings.

You see with what affection I love your cousin. What is your opinion? Should a woman ever keep a secret from her husband?"

"Surely not, Caroline."

"If the knowledge of that secret will make him unhappy?"

"I should think hardly any unhappiness can be equal to that which would arise from the suspension of confidence."

"I think so too; but it is a most painful circumstance I have to communicate to him. It will give *you* a great deal of pain."

"Good Heavens! what can you mean?"

"I will tell you; and you shall say, whether I had not better defer mentioning it to George for the present; for, after all, my suspicion may have magnified the fact. Mr. Vernon —"

The moment she mentioned his name, her secret flashed upon me. I had noticed his particular attentions in the country, and his whole behaviour this evening convinced me, that he had offered an insult to Caroline. I now perceived

the object of Sir Francis Darrell's frowns, and of the warmth with which he spoke apart to Mr. Vernon; that it was Caroline, and not I, who engaged his thoughts at that time; and that his emotion was anger.

"Mr. Vernon," continued she, "has been a friend from infancy: he went abroad early, but renewed, I ought to say increased, his intimacy with George as soon as he returned from the army. George is extremely attached to him. He is, as you know, an agreeable man, clever, and I really believe, in the main, good; but I fear that he has imbibed maxims among free-thinking companions, which have given an injurious latitude to his principles. In religion he is more careless than impious, and, though he does not openly say it, he shows that he piques himself upon the favours of women. I am confident, Augusta, that our sex is in general virtuous; but the power of flattery and gaiety over weak minds lead too many to imprudencies and to vice. Mr. Vernon, I fear, has seen something in me which induces him

to think me of that class, who hold prudent secrecy to be all the virtue necessary in life. To tell you how I am mortified is utterly out of my power. It is now a considerable time since I have observed his attentions exceeding the bounds of propriety. I have shut my eyes rather than believe it, so anxious have I been to prevent a breach of friendship; but I cannot persuade myself to be blind any longer. He has this evening looked at me improperly; he has pressed my hand; he has even dared to say, 'What a happy man is Godfrey!' Is it not hard," continued she, "to be placed in such a situation? I ought to be angry, but I am more hurt, more grieved, than angry. I think of Lady Mount-Vernon, of George, of Sir Francis, of Mr. Vernon himself; of the consequences of the disclosure of my feelings. Tell me, Augusta, how shall I act?"

Such was the unfortunate dilemma, such the sentiments of my dear, my amiable Caroline. Displeased as we both were, and richly as Mr. Vernon deserves punishment, we agreed in thinking that

the step she ought to take required consideration, that a short delay was no breach of confidence, and that we would again consult upon it before she spoke of it to George. After this conversation we separated for the night; and I have been writing so long, that I hear my father and George coming in — it is near two o'clock. I cannot help adding, however, before I put down my pen, that, upon repeated reflection, I am unable to ascribe any part of Sir Francis Darrell's conduct to the cause which Caroline traces. I feel myself painfully situated with such an idea, and it will require more than a common effort to maintain my presence of mind, throughout the evening we are to pass to-morrow at Lady Mount-Vernon's.

* * * * * * * * *

Thursday morning.

Prepare, my dearest sister, for a surprise. — Will you hear it? Will you believe it? You may; for though I know nothing of it myself, I have such author-

ity for it, that I must believe it, whether I will or not. It seems an undoubted fact, Angelica, that I am in love—in love with Sir Francis Darrell, and don't know it. George insinuates it, Caroline discerns it, and lastly, my father knows it. I have just had a very affectionate conversation with the last, for which I was prepared by what I heard last night from Caroline.

"Well, GUSTA," said he, "I am going to talk to you upon that old, stale, good-for-nothing topic, Love."

"Oh! my dear father," said I, "I know what you are going to say; and I would rather hear you talk upon any other subject, for I know nothing of love."

"If that's the case, Gusta! talking of it will give you no pain, and, therefore, why should it not be as indifferent as any other topic?"

"Well! my dear father, it is your pleasure, and I will listen to you."

"My dear Augusta," replied he, "you know that all authority is out of the question with me; you know that affection

is the only spring of your conduct towards me that I wish. I shall not begin now to talk of duty for a motive, after so many years actuated by love. I know you do not think of marriage;—to plunge headlong into it is a folly, of which you are incapable; but, without hastiness, it is far from being unbecoming of you to take the thought of it into consideration. Nothing is wanting to complete my happiness, but seeing you united to a man worthy of you:—and he must be no common man whom I shall think so. Caroline, I find, has opened to you the state of my mind on the subject, and I must say that, if I had the whole kingdom to choose out of, I should name Sir Francis Darrell."

In spite of my being prepared as I was, when the name came from my father's lips my blood ran into my face. He looked seriously, but affectionately, at me.

"Instead of recommending the passion of love to you, my dear Augusta, I warn you against it. I know your strength of mind, but I know also that love often

insinuates itself unconsciously; and, should there be any occasion to combat him, it requires some hard fighting to gain a victory."

"Surely, my dear father, you do not think you have occasion to give this advice to me."

"I do not think the worse of you," replied he, "when I say I think I have. I am sure in your situation I should love Darrell; all I wish you to do is, to manage so well, that there shall be no unhappiness in any case; but, which I imagine very possible, that there shall be a great deal of happiness on all sides. You know I always speak openly to you, Augusta, and it is on this occasion more incumbent upon me to do so than on any which has occurred in your life. If I have any judgment in these matters, — that young man's heart is yours; on the other hand, though I will not say your heart is his, I may at least say, that I think it would be, if there were not some impediments, unnecessary impediments, in the way. I love, I esteem, I admire this young man. I trust you will not

allow the difference in your modes of religious faith to foil such happiness as may be produced by an union with him — I hope you love me too well. But this is not the only impediment; — there is a something, a smothered fire of some kind at his heart, which should be altogether extinguished. It is in the way between you. Now, my child, I think it is in your power, and yours only, to extinguish it. I think you owe it to him; and, if it is really as I suspect, that he is in love with you, I know not any thing that would give me so much pleasure as your accepting him. But when I say this, God forbid you should be swayed by it against your inclination; that would end in misery. One thing more; though I am confident he loves you, I am not equally sure that he will ever propose himself to you: there may be something at his heart that may prevent it; therefore watch your own, and keep it so much your own, that it may be at your disposal. Lovers you will have a choice of, though, in my opinion, none in any respect like Darrell. His natural

disposition, however clouded for a time, his acquirements, his understanding, his desire for truth, his generosity, his manners, all mark him as one of the first of men, and when this secret fever is got over, and got over it will be, I hope he will be one of the happiest. Think of what I have said, Augusta, and act according to your judgment."

I was quite overpowered with my father's kindness, and had scarcely courage enough to say, that I was very sure my heart was at my own disposal, but that I did not think him right in respect to Sir Francis's, and that, even if it was, the causes which would arise against his wish would, on both sides, be insurmountable. "No, no," said he, "weigh what I have said, and I am sure all will go well." He embraced me, and left me.

Well! my dear Angelica! What say you? Do you believe it? Is your Augusta in love? Let your opinion be what it may, I beg you to be assured that I do not, and cannot, think of a union with any man with whom it will be

my duty to differ in opinion : — again I say it must not be. But my situation is critical : he has gained the hearts of my father and cousins, and I have no one to help me in the contest. Pray come to me : pray to my dear Marchese and Marchesa to send you to preserve your Augusta.

I must now think about the ball. — When last I wrote to you I thought of much pleasure in it : — now I look forward to the evening with dread. How am I to summon courage and calmness for the night, with the consciousness of what has passed in conversation with Caroline, and also with my father? I will do my best — oh that you were with me!

AUGUSTA.

LETTER LIV.

Augusta to Angelica.

(In Continuation.)

How time flies! The ball is over; another day is past; a thousand things have happened; and I am again at my table writing to my dear Angelica. It will not be easy to throw into method what I have to say, but I will try. I confess I shall write with pain, for I cannot divest myself of those feelings which I have never scrupled to own towards Sir Francis Darrell; and they could not have been more wrung, even had the suspicions entertained of my heart by my father and cousins been true. Whatever grounds I may unconsciously have given for those suspicions respecting me, I wonder how they could possibly imagine him attached to me beyond the common friendship he professes. I have very strong proofs,

Angelica, to give you, that there is no foundation for such a surmise — and you will see that I have good reason to suppose that, however slanderous that vile anonymous note was as to me, there was some truth as to an engagement of the heart; — but I am anticipating — my intention was to give you an account of the night in order, and to let you know all my feelings, the agreeable ones, as well as the painful, and I will still endeavour to do it.

We were early in the room, yet Sir Francis was there before us. He was in conversation with Lady Mount-Vernon when we went in. It appears that she had, by Mr. Vernon, requested his early attendance; and, when I learned the reason of it, it encreased the admiration and affection which she already possessed in my mind. Delightful woman! She does all she undertakes so completely and with such grace that she doubly charms. After what she had heard respecting Sir Francis from his friend, and what she had herself witnessed, she resolved that her reception of him should be marked

with every honour she could bestow upon him — and she had engaged him to come thus early that she might appoint him to open the ball with her. She had settled the weighty business, she said, but not without much difficulty, as he protested he was no dancer.

"Miss Saville," said she, "I engage you for him for the next two dances. Sir Francis, permit me to present you to your partner for the next two dances."

He bowed, saying to me: "Really it is long since I danced — and I certainly did not mean to be showing my blundering steps to-night: my partner will have to tutor me in this also, if she consent to be troubled with me."

I answered that I did not think he would want tutoring. I felt as if the eyes of every one were upon me: — mine met Caroline's, but she was too kind to distress me by her looks, yet the recollection of our conversation shook my nerves a little.

As the company came in, I heard the name of Darrell echoing from mouth to mouth, and observed much surprise shown

at the sight of him. He was introduced to some of Lady Mount-Vernon's friends: groups literally collected about him, and great was the astonishment of all when she called upon him to lead down the first dance. It was now my turn to be pointed out. — Mr. Vernon had engaged me; and, as I went to my place, my ears were assailed with "that's she, that's she! Where? where? There, there! Yes! in France! Sir Francis Darrell! They are both here!" Imagine my feelings, my dear Angelica, as well as you can, for I cannot pretend to describe them to you: there certainly was a great confusion in my head, and my heart was not sufficiently light to enjoy the dance. Some of the company I knew before, but these were but a small portion of the number. Mr. Vernon, who was all life and spirits, introduced me to my neighbours in the dance, and pointed out other characters in the room. — By his assiduity, he called off my attention from myself; and, when the first dance finished, I felt sufficiently at ease to take some pleasure in going down the second. At the conclusion I

was hastening to join Caroline, without attending to the company about me, when I heard myself addressed by a female voice —

" I am glad to see Miss Saville so well."

I looked and found that, in endeavouring to open a passage through the lookers-on, I was passing Lady Betty Bramble-bear. — I was not a little discomposed at the sight of her. I returned her notice by hoping she was well.

" I have been admiring your dancing these ten minutes," said she : — " give me leave to introduce Miss Craven to you ; she is a neighbour of yours in Northamptonshire, and is at present staying with me in town."

" I interchanged court'sies with the lady.

" I see Mrs. Godfrey," said Lady Betty, " dancing with Lord Mount-Vernon : — she has not got the best partner in the room."

" He rides better than he dances, my dear, but never mind that," cried Lady

Bab, who, unobserved, was standing at her shoulder.

. "Hah! Lady Barbara, how do you do? I have not seen you for an age."

"No," replied Lady Bab, "not since I was at Bramblebear-Hall."

"I hope," said Lady Betty, "you enjoyed the season in Herefordshire, and had no falls?"

"Thank you, my dear, the same to you," retorted the huntress, "I have never had a fall, and I wish you never may."

"May what?"

"Ask Miss Saville," said she, laughing and hastening off.

"What can Lady Barbara mean?" said Lady Betty: "How do you do, Mr. Vernon?"

"What!" said he, "have you been piquing my cousin upon her riding?"

"Not I," cried she. "So I see Darrell is here: — wonders will never cease; — and to lead off too: — I was not in the room, but every body is talking of it: — do you know whom he dances with next?

Perhaps he is not engaged — go and bring him to me."

"He is engaged," replied Mr. Vernon, "but I will obey your Ladyship. Will you allow us to pass? we are going to join Mrs. Godfrey."

"By all means," said she, staring at me, as she made way.

Sir Francis was at the head of the room with his partner, and, on seeing me approach, stepped forward to claim me.

"I can promise you," said Lady Mount-Vernon, "that he will not put you out."

He now paid me a pleasing but not a particular attention, not nearly so much so as Mr. Vernon did. — He dances with remarkable ease, but with more grace than vivacity, as if he felt a consciousness that he had no right to be dancing. Indeed he once said so.

"Oh! Miss Saville," said he, "I have no right to the spirits requisite to dancing."

Though not particular, he made himself agreeable, indeed more so than if he had been particular, and I should have spent a

happy half-hour, had I not observed the company on both sides looking at us, and whispering in crowds, as they followed us through the dance. Some of their whispers reached my ear, and of course must have reached Sir Francis's.

"Her first winter." —

"Brought up in Italy."

"Godfrey's cousin."

"Found her in a wood."

"Oh! that's she who was found in a wood."

"Where does *he* keep himself?"

"Odd stories."

You will believe, Angelica, that the pleasure I should have taken in the dance was completely destroyed; and that I would have gladly resigned my partner to any other lady in the room, to have escaped the painful notice which my dancing with him produced.

Among others who crowded after us I perceived Lord Mariton, on whose countenance there was a malicious smile. — He had not recognized me at all: — when we got to the bottom of the dance, he came up and asked me for the next

two. At the conclusion of my dance, with Mr. Vernon, I had entered into several engagements:—I told him this—on which he asked if he might hope to be placed on my list:—I said the last gentleman to whom I was engaged, was Mr. Aspell, and I should afterwards hold myself engaged to him. He continued talking and standing between Sir Francis and me, upon which the latter said,

"My Lord, I am still Miss Saville's partner."

The other with a frown, said, "Well! what then, Sir?"

"Only, I'll thank you to stand from between us," said Sir Francis, and with his arm he gently put him aside. He resumed his ground—Sir Francis looked seriously but calmly at him, and desisted.

We were very soon after engaged in going up the dance.—"I hope," said he, "you place my submission to its proper account."

"I do, indeed," replied I, "and I thank you."

"I should never forgive myself," said he, "were I to occasion your name to be

implicated in a foolish quarrel, and I know you approve forbearance, which is indeed sometimes a very difficult virtue to practise."

How amiable is this! and what a pity is it that a man who thinks so well, and possesses such powers of mind, should suffer himself to be the dupe of any woman! I say the dupe, for I cannot believe that he is playing the hypocrite with us all, even if wicked enough to intend practising upon my heart, as said in the anonymous note. He is no hypocrite, but he appears unaccountably shackled by the arts of one, of the nature of whose attachment to him it is impossible to doubt. It gives me a pang, but, in spite of the opinion of my family, it is such a pang as I should feel were I his sister.

Having led me to my seat, he left me with Caroline, and I missed him for some time. At first I thought he avoided Lady Betty, but I afterwards perceived him in close conversation with her, at a distance, in another room. Oh! how painful the sight was to me! It was when I took my place for a

dance — I stood directly opposite the arch between the rooms. Before I advanced high enough in the dance to lose sight of them, he left her and came towards the ball-room, but I did not observe to what point he went. In dancing down, as I approached the bottom, I again saw him, and also her: — she was laughing, and I saw her strike him very familiarly with her fan. They were at a short distance from the dance; his back was towards me. There stood near them an extraordinary looking creature, a young man, who every now and then seemed to jerk the tip of a sharp nose downwards towards his mouth, accompanied with a wink of his left eye, and an arch grin. He was evidently making his grimaces to another person, as indications of what was passing in his mind about Sir Francis and Lady Betty, the latter of whom caught a sight of me, and I imagined redoubled her familiarities in consequence. She laughed, she flirted her handkerchief in his face — called him familiarly Darrell; and said, " you *shall* dance." The odd man seemed un-

able to contain himself, and, having winked again and again at his friend, turned his face directly towards me, and winked his eye at *me*. I was shocked, and, I believe, blushed extremely. Lady Betty, perceiving that Sir Francis was turning, nodded her head at me, and cried, "mayn't he, Miss Saville?" She took his arm at the same time, as if to bring him forward — but, without looking, probably, or hearing my name, he disappeared — and so did she, some of the company coming between us; and when they passed they were both gone. I would have given the world to have been at home.

"How do you, Miss?" said the winking man to me.

"I have not the pleasure of knowing you."

"I know you, though," said he; "I saw you at Peterborough, at the Cathedral, and often in your barouche, and this very night, since you came to the ball, Betsy was introduced to you. I am very often at Bramblebear-hall — Betsy is staying with Lady Betty Bramblebear;

she is my sister; her name is Craven, and so is mine."

Here I was turned by the dancer of the next couple, and could only bow my acknowledgment of acquaintance to Mr. Craven. He was, however, immediately at my elbow again.

"Did you observe those two?" said he, winking his eye, "too bad! was'nt it?"

I knew not how to treat him, but was fortunately relieved by my partner, who, not brooking the intrusion, called,

"Order."

"By all means," cried Mr. Craven, and desisted from his pursuit.

It was but too clear, Angelica, that the anonymous note was not false in every particular; and, in spite of the delight I had lately experienced in the company and correspondence of Sir Francis Darrell, I was convinced that perfection was not to be expected in human nature. I had suffered myself to be persuaded by his friend and my own mind, that there existed no attachment between him and Lady Betty — but am I perpetually to

deny the evidence of my senses and believe only according to my wishes? And this is not all — but I will proceed regularly. — I made every effort not to excite any notice of my appearance, and particularly as it might be attributed to the departure of Sir Francis, who had gone away before the dance I allude to was finished. He commissioned Mr. Vernon to make his apology to Lady Mount-Vernon for going away so early.

I ought to give you a description of the rooms and dresses of the night, but you can imagine all this from others which have been described to you, and you know that the hostess has great taste. The company formed an elegant assembly of gay, lively, handsome, and sensible people of distinction. Some few of the ladies, I was sorry to see, appeared as if they did not estimate modesty among the virtues of women. It is said that all these mistaken persons cannot be shut out from society; but, in truth, I do not see why. They cannot blush themselves, and are they to make others blush for them?

The evening seemed to pass most agreeably with all the company. — As for me, I confess I wished myself at home before it was half over. With the supper and the dancing after supper, it was between four and five o'clock before we broke up — Lady Mount-Vernon would keep us to the very last. Here, Angelica, comes the most painful occurrence of the evening. On my shawl's being presented to me by Mr. Vernon, I found a note pinned to it, without any address: — it was in pencil and contained these words: "If you are not convinced now, take your fate." I immediately gave it to Caroline, who stood by me. She thought it most prudent to say nothing and slipped it into her glove. It was read by our party before we went to bed, and we agreed that there could be no doubt now of its being the artifice of Lady Betty Bramblebear, inspired by a spirit of jealousy. George thought it might be fully detected by enquiring at Lord Mount-Vernon's, to know who had been meddling with the shawls, but we concluded that it was not

worth the while. I could not help expressing my doubt of Sir Francis's weakness from what I had myself observed. Neither my father, nor George, nor Caroline would hear of it. They declared that it was some farther artifice of the same lady. George said he had observed her conduct, and Sir Francis's also: — it was folly on her side, and suffering on his; and his early departure was a proof of it. I can only hope, my dearest Angelica, that it may prove so, but what I saw is so impressed on my mind; and that Mr. Craven's wink, with his "Did you observe them? too bad!" perpetually haunts me.

I will not conclude without saying that Mr. Vernon has since behaved himself so well, and so much to Caroline's satisfaction, that I hope those weak indications of an improper attachment were the result of a momentary folly, and that they will never appear again. I shall now dispatch my packet, though I am expecting one from you daily. I hope soon to hear that your coming to me is fixed. — I trust by your next to hear that

Mr. Dartford is at Florence: — his mother is in town, but was not at the ball. Alas! my father has had another letter from Count Olivastro: — he is coming to England — Adieu! my dearest Angelica. Ever love

Your most affectionate sister,

AUGUSTA

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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